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LETTERS
TO SANCHIA
—
MAURICE HEWLETT

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LETTERS TO SANCHIA

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UPON

THINGS AS THEY ARE

EXTRACTED FROM THE CORRESPONDENCE OF
MR. JOHN MAXWELL SENHOUSE

BY

MAURICE HEWLETT

For of the soule the bodie forme doth take ;
For soule is forme, and doth the bodie make.

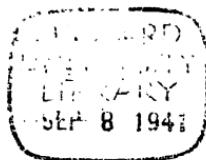
An Hymne in Honour of Beautie.

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Published April, 1910

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ADVERTISEMENT

A DESIRE has been more than once expressed that the Letters upon Affairs at Large which my friend Mr. Senhouse addressed to his friend Miss Sanchia Percival should be published in a convenient form; and as nobody can be more anxious than myself that his opinions should be widely known, I have prevailed upon my publishers to allow me to extract them, together with the necessary matter of explanation, from that true tale, *Open Country*, in which I was first allowed to put them before the world. It is proper that I should now explain that the Introduction and the sections of the text within square brackets are only varied from what appears in *Open Country* so far as is rendered necessary by this present Edition of the Letters. The Letters themselves are reprinted verbatim.

MAURICE HEWLETT.

LONDON, February 1910.

INTRODUCTION

THE pages which follow, and the tale which they unfold, are the work of a man still living, and, in a sense, the property of a lady in the same state of grace. For these reasons the actual names are not warrantable. The writer is content to be known as John Maxwell Senhouse; Sanchia Percival is as near to the recipient's name as I need to go. With this provision, I have the consent of both parties to the publication of letters which do them no discredit, and do not reveal an intimacy of which they have any reason to be ashamed. It is hardly necessary, perhaps, to add that while the writer has my sympathy, I am not to be taken as sharing all his opinions with him, and that I have allowed myself the responsibility of selecting what I would print. The correspondence as a whole is massive; some of it is occasional; some relates to the correspondent's private affairs, and some to the private affairs of other people. There is a good deal of freedom used in dealing with the names and deeds of persons much in the world's eye. To publish names and comments together might be scandalous; either without the other would be stupid. So also with the tale—such tale as lay in the relations

of the eloquent, profuse, and random writer of these letters with Miss Sanchia Percival; with that again I have had to be very frugal here, contenting myself for the most part with the briefest explanation, introductory of each chosen document. It is a good tale, as all true tales are, and has in fact been told—part in a volume called *Open Country*, and part again in a sequel to that work which bears the appropriate title of *Rest Harrow*. But these matters do not concern me now. I have found my present interest amply in the opinions of the man, not in his emotions, except in so far as they sway his opinions.

By way of introduction, however, to this little volume, something must be said before the letters can be left to speak for themselves. Their writer, when I knew him first (red hot and sizzling with theory), was the most cheerful revolutionary you could conceive of. Anarchism—for he signed himself Anarchist—on his showing, was the best joke in the world. He would have dethroned kings and obliterated their dynasties as Isaac Walton would have had you impale worms on your hooks, with the same tender nicety. ‘My dear old chap,’ one might hear him say to a doomed monarch, ‘we’ve had a splendid time; but a game’s a game, and really yours is up. You perish for the good of your so-called people, you know; upon my honour, it’s all right. Now, this bomb is beautifully timed. It’ll be over before you can say knife. Just you see.’

That was the sort of impression he made upon one in those early days; he was frightfully reason-

able, and perfectly ridiculous. He was then at Cambridge, King's his college, embroiled for ever with the dons—heading his examination papers ‘Down with the *bourgeois!*’ or ‘Death to tyrants!’¹—and yet for ever in their houses. It was the women who would have him there; his manner with women was perfect. He put them on his own level, to begin with, and his level was high. He neither flattered nor bullied, never told fibs, nor paid compliments, nor posed for what he was not; nor, so far as I can learn, did he ever make love. Flirtation and he were contradictions, for, ridiculously as he would put things, and do them, the most ridiculous part of his performance always was that he was perfectly serious. But he was all for liberty and equality, and very likely was waiting for the ladies to begin. He would have seen no reason whatever against that; and I can imagine him discussing a tender proposal from one of them with the most devastating candour, lying on the hearth-rug (his favourite place in the room) with his face between his thin hands, and his dark eyes glossy with mystery. He was extraordinarily popular; and when he was sent down for some outrageous act or another—I forget exactly what it was, but fancy it had something flagrant to do with Lord Beaconsfield or the Athanasian Creed—he spent the time of rustication actually in Cambridge, in the house of a Fellow of his college, as everybody knew perfectly well. They dug a canoe out of a tree-trunk, the queer pair of them, and navigated the Cam from Ashwell to Littleport.

¹ This he used to call ‘sowing the seed.’

He was a great reader, but a fitful, an excellent Grecian, and left the University without attempting his degree. He had come, he said, to consider the course of study prescribed an absurdity, and the reward held out to be a poppery unworthy of a serious man's time. Such a man, with that persuasive, irresistible smile of his, he solemnly proclaimed himself in a letter to the Vice-Chancellor—or with what he fully intended to be solemnity. But his manner of leaving Cambridge was so characteristic that I cannot omit it, though I study to be brief.

It was simplicity itself. On a certain May morning in the year 1885 he rose as usual, dressed as usual in grey flannel trousers, white sweater, and pair of nailed boots; breakfasted as usual upon an egg and some coffee, and walked out of his rooms, out of his college, out of Cambridge, never to return.

That was literally the manner of his going. The only thing he took away with him, except the clothes he stood in, was a holly stick. He never wore a hat, and his bedmaker found all his loose change—gold, silver, and copper—lying at random on his dressing-table, and his cheque-book in a drawer. The rest of his belongings, which were ordinary, neither more necessary nor less various than the common run—clothes, furniture, books, pipes, correspondence, including the morning's post, which, I am told, had not even been opened—he left everything just where it was, dropped it just then and there, and vanished. Nor was anything heard of him in England for two years, after a

letter received by his father, which had the post-mark 'Cracow,' and the date '14th July,' in which he said that he had come to the sudden conviction of waste of time, money, and opportunity, and must be excused from indulging either the parental partiality or his own proneness to luxury any longer. He had chosen to come to Poland, he said, because nobody could tell him anything about it except that it was, on the whole, the most oppressed country in Europe. He was uncertain of his return, and begged to assure his correspondent that he was well, happy, self-supporting, and his affectionate Jack.

His adventures in Poland, which led him certainly and expeditiously to Siberia, are no concern of ours just now. He conspired, I believe, in Latin, since he had not the tongue of the country; but, being overheard and more or less understood, to Siberia he went, and was there lost sight of for a year. How he escaped, whether by intervention from home or his own address, doesn't now matter. I know that he was in England in 1887, for I met him in the autumn of that year in his father's house in the Eastern Midlands, irredeemably enthusiastic in the cause of absolute liberty, in touch with Tolstoy, Kropotkin, Stepniak, and half the idealists of Europe; a confirmed wanderer, a sojourner in tents; as much artist, scribbler, desultory scholar as ever, but with a new taste, which he had acquired in his exile from a fellow-conscript, a taste for botany, which became later on the ruling passion of his life. He was more charming and more ridiculous than ever, and,

mentally, entirely naked and entirely unashamed. To please his father—with whom he was on the best of terms—he went into the counting-house at Dingeley for six months; but in the spring of '88 he was off again, none knew whither, though it was discovered afterwards to have been the Atlas, and after that never settled down in the haunts of civilised man for more than a few weeks at a time.

What could be said or done to him? He was of full age, took nothing of his father's store, kept himself entirely to his own satisfaction on his painting and journalism. Of the former I am not qualified to speak. It was very impressionistic, highly poetical rendering of atmosphere and colour. If Corot was not his master in the art, I am a dunce. As to the other, he wrote pretty constantly for wild newspapers of which you and I hear nothing—*Dawn*, *The Fiery Cross*, *The Intransigeant*, *The International*—and now and then had a poem in *The Speaker*, and now and then an article in a review. As for his wants, which were simple, he lived in a tent of his own stitching, which he carried about in a tilt-cart, drawn by a lean horse, well called Rosinante. Everything he owned was in this cart; and he seldom stayed in one place for more than a week. Periodically he would vanish, as the mood took him, and perhaps be heard of in California, Colorado, the Caucasus, or Cashmere; but as he grew older and his passion for naturalising foreign plants grew with him, he confined himself more within the limits of our seas; and his knowledge of England's recesses

must have equalled Cobbett's or Borrow's. He was hail-fellow with all the gipsies, tinkers, horse-stealers, and *racaille* on the road, and with most of the tramps. They all liked him consumedly, all trusted him, but all called him Mr. John, or by his patronymic with the prefix of ceremony. That was odd, because I am certain he did not expect it of them.

Thus wandering, perpetually busy and inordinately happy, one used to meet him in chance angles and coigns of our islands, and more occasionally still in or near the house of a friend: seldom in it, for he nearly always begged leave to pitch his tent in park or paddock, whence to come and go as he pleased. It was during one of these temporary returns to civilisation as we call it (and how he used to declaim upon that!) that he became acquainted with Sanchia Percival. It must have been in or about 1894.

She was then in her twentieth year, the youngest daughter of a gentleman whom I will call Thomas Welbore Percival, a wealthy man with a business in the City of London and house in Great Cumberland Place. There was a goodly tale of young Percivals, high-spirited all of them, and all girls; four daughters besides Sanchia, of whom one was married substantially, another betrothed to a county gentleman, Sir George Pinwell, Baronet, an insufferable blonde person. They all had romantic names; they were Philippa (Mrs. Tompsett-King), Melusine, Hawise (the betrothed), Victoria, and then this young Sanchia-Josepha, who, from a romp with her hair all about her face, had developed

into a thoughtful, slim girl with grey and dreamy eyes and a sad mouth; and later on, when I knew her best, was a beautiful woman of the classic type, having a profile exactly like one of the maidens bearing baskets in the Panathenaic frieze. Our friend's, the letter-writer's, first acquaintance with her was in the middle period, that of her dawn, when, as it were, her glory-to-be was palely shadowed forth from her. It lay brooding in her eyes, was to be discovered, like a halo, about her broad brows. Her chin had already that roundness which is the type's, but her mouth was not the lovely feature it afterwards became. It had a pathetic droop; it was tremulous, very expressive. All this I learned afterwards from my friend on one or other of the rare occasions when he could be led on to talk about her. He showed me, in fact, a photograph. She hit him hard, I know.

They met, as I say, in the country. She was staying with an old Lady Mauleverer; he was in a neighbour's house, that of Roger Charnock, the Liberal Member for Graseby; that is to say, he was in Charnock's park, encamped there, dining at the house whenever it suited his whim, but otherwise free as air. Charnock and he had been at Rugby together, though the Member had been in the Sixth and the tramp his fag. But Charnock had been kind, and a friendship had arisen and persisted. The rebel was allowed to do as he liked up at Bill Hill.

There was much intercourse between Gorston Park, the Mauleverer stronghold, and Bill Hill, which was Charnock's. Our man, whose high

spirits were not to be denied by any one who came within a mile of them (least of all by a receptive young Sanchia Percival), had them all under his spell in no time. Even Lady Mauleverer, I am told, called him a ‘ridiculous creature,’ which, for her, was a term of high endearment. He was a noticeable fellow, unlike anybody else, very thin, very dark, saturnine, looking taller than he really was. There was something elusive about him, which may have been the effect of his piercing black eyes or of his furtive smile. You could never tell whether he was chuckling at you or with you; he rarely laughed outright. He had the look of a wild animal, which seems friendly and assured, but is ready at any instant to dart into hiding. They used to call him the Faun, and tease to be shown his ears. Charnock declared that he wore his hair long and let it tumble about his brows to hide a fine pair of horns. He was a wonderful talker; to see his shallow face light up under the glow of his thought was to feel as if the sun had burst through a great cloud. Like all good talkers, he had fits of long and most eloquent speechlessness. He would sit then with his chin on his knees, and bony hands clasped over his shins, and look like a dead Viking crouched in his cairn, vacant-eyed, fixed, a stare—a silence, I assure you, that could be felt. Add his strange nocturnal prowlings, during which he was supposed to hold mysterious communion with the creatures of darkness—bats, owls, badgers, otters, foxes—and talk secrets with the plants, and you may guess how

he might have struck the imagination of young Miss Sanchia-Josepha, a girl on the threshold of womanhood, in the throes of her power to come. At the end of a week, as I understand, they were fast allies; at the end of a fortnight inseparable companions, sketching together every day, and he teaching her to read Greek, out of the *Anthology*. At the end of three weeks they were eternal friends, and had sworn it to each other, no doubt with the appropriate ritual. That is where the correspondence begins, at the end of that third week. I only have his side of it—he destroyed her letters as they came—and can only give selections, of course. It lasted intensely for two years, with occasional breaks when they saw each other, and was most voluminous. Then it stopped, for reasons which are to be made plain, and which, I shall add on my own account, do the writers credit. A relationship had developed which was not, and could hardly be again, the old one. The man broke it, the young woman accepted his decision.

I will allow myself but one more word. Those who know Sanchia Percival at this hour know not only a beautiful, but an exquisite woman. Her mind corresponds with her pure face, her moral stature is of a piece with her physical perfection. One indeed fulfils the other. She is the perfect woman nobly planned of the poet, charitable, tolerant, self-respecting, yet humble-minded. She performs her duties exactly, is interested in every humane thing, and a charming hostess. Her life is her art, her art delicately expressive of herself. All

INTRODUCTION

11

this she declares to be her friend's doing; where-upon he flames forth with the cry that every ideal he ever had was lamped in her from her birth. This generous debate shows you that their intimacy has been renewed, and persists. And indeed it does.

FIRST LETTER

ON WORLDLY WISDOM

[*The letter explains itself. He had just left her after three weeks of constant and idyllic companionship. Signs of hurt are visible to the experienced eye. The pleasure he takes, for instance, in the use of her name—that's one. Another is his plain anxiety to prove to her his unconcern.]*

12th May.

I am thirty miles away from you, Sanchia, encamped upon the edge of a glimmering marsh, awaiting dawn to take up my bearings. All about me the shore birds are piping their wild, sad music; most melodious of them all, the curlew: how I love that bird! You never heard the little owls, did you, at San Gimignano, plaintive trebles fretting to each other in the night? They are said to be the souls of two murdered lads, Rossellino and Primerano by name. I am sure Pythagoras was right concerning wildfowl, and that the soul of my grand-dam may fitly inhabit a bird. I forget whose moan the Greeks heard in the curlew's cry: some robbed young life's, no doubt. But I wander.

I wish to report, Sanchia, please, that I have

travelled since I left you at daybreak (yesterday!), with a long rest at noon, and am now going to bed in my sack, for it's too dark yet and I'm too sleepy to pitch a tent. Besides, it's close and steamy. I think that I can smell the rain, as, saving your presence (but I know you'll laugh), I have the knack of doing. Perhaps you'll remember, please, that I did it on the day of the Oulton picnic; and who turned up a nose, and left a cloak behind, and would have got a wet skin if it hadn't been for a masterful Anarchist and his jacket. Saint Martin was beat that time; for *he* divided his jacket; whereas—so there's for you, pert maid.

Percy and the Dowser came pelting after me, and took me on to the second milestone. We played Pioneers through the enemy's country. Percy reported you as having been seen on the way to church. Keen as mustard, they were, to the very end. Did you meet either of them, I wonder? No—of course you didn't. You went home through the woods, like a respectable Dryad, I know.

I meant to have told you, but had other things to think about, that Charnock, after dinner, had drawn me awfully aside, and, in a whisper which could have been heard from Graseby to Colehampton, as good as said what he thought about me and my deplorable way of life. He's done that before often enough. This was what he called a 'special appeal.' He *looked* what an ass he thought me. That I should renounce six hundred a year (to begin with) and a certain share in the colliery for

wandering by the hedgerows on what I can pick up! He had no words to voice his thoughts. They lay too deep for tears—or jeers—or swears. He said that Lady Badlesmere had spoken about me; she thought it such a pity. Poor old chap, with his Stake in the County, and Vested Interests, and Seat in Parliament; with his hounds and his horses at break of day, men-servants (all touching their hats), maid-servants (all bobbing), boys at Eton, family pew—imagine how he chafes. I tell you, I irritate him to madness; he can't stand it. He's fond of me, too, you know, which makes it worse; but he doesn't want to remember that I live. It's a tarnish on his prosperity. It mildews his roses, and blights the hops that make the beer by which he lives and fares softly. If I argue with him, he foams at the mouth. So I laughed at him, and made him give me a cigarette. That soothed him. It had a gold tip, and was very spluttery. You know the kind. Bond Street. He'll be better now I'm gone.

So will you, my lady, perhaps. I think that—once or twice—I scared you; indeed, I know that I did. I've seen it in your eyebrows, and in your eyes too. The grey goes lighter and the iris-rings contract when you're really scared. I don't say that you think me mad: I'll put it that, to you, I'm unaccountable. You too think it all rather a pity, and that it would really be more comfortable if you could be sure of me in a large stone box, with a carriage-drive and entrance-lodge, and a tidy old woman to bend her knees whenever she opens my worship a gate. Hey? Confess,

Sanchia, confess. And then my painting should be a gentlemanly amusement, not a livelihood—shouldn't it now? Why should I sell my wits when I've got a rich father and a family coal-mine? Why not put on a black Melton coat and square-topped felt hat and go to church of a Sunday, like a Christian or an ordinary man? My dear, shall we reason together? Shall we have it out? I've told you all of it before—by fits; but I feel your scare on me now, and can't stand it at a distance.

Every man must seek salvation his own way. That's all I'm doing, upon my honour.

Let's clear the air. What precisely do I mean by salvation, or, for that matter, what do *you* mean by it? (I'm talking of this world now, remember. Perhaps I'll have a go at your reverence about the other, some day.) Well, I'll tell you. According to me, salvation in this world is the power of using every faculty we have to the full—every available muscle to the highest tension, every ounce of brain to the last drop, every emotion to the piercing and swooning point, every sense to an acuteness so subtle that you are able to feel the hairs on a moth's underwing, separate the tones on a starling's neck, smell, like a hare, the very breath of the corn, see like a sea-bird, hear like a stag. Those, with respect to Charnock and his fellow-pundits at Westminster, or to the Able Editors of Fleet Street with their telephones to their long ears, and their eyes on the latest intelligence—those are the faculties which God has given us to save ourselves withal. We are to replenish the earth, I believe—but what for?

For the earth's advantage? Not at all, but for ours. (Personally, mind you, I don't subscribe at all to the doctrine that we are lords of creation. Why should we be? The little that I know about the beasts, and what I am learning about the plants, suggest to me that they have their salvation to work out by the side of us, and that we can help each other a good deal more than we do at present. I once saw a child playing horses in a garden with a little dog. The dog was the horse, and wore a halter of string over his muzzle; *she* held the reins. They had a great run, and she brought him back to his loose-box, undid the halter, and set him to a wisp or two of hay. If you'll take it from me, he buried his nose in it, and made believe to have his feed. Upon my honour, that's true! All right: then don't tell me that we and the beasts can't help each other any more. But *you* won't, I know. It's old Charnock I'm doubtful about, who blows birds to pieces with a gun.)

That was a digression. I was waiting for you to admit that the full use of our faculties is our way of temporal salvation: to think to the full, reason and remember, to swell or uplift the heart, to walk and run; to learn how to do things, make them, use them, delight in them; to be alive in every fibre, and at all times; to be always alert, always awake, always at the top of perfection, until we are wholesomely and thankfully tired—and then, dear God, to sleep like the dead! If we are things of body, mind, and motion, as you'll allow, that must be salvation. Very well, we

agree so far—at least I hope we do; for I give you fair warning, my friend, that in that admission you have placed in my hands a most powerful weapon. And don't you forget it!

Now then. If the use and perfecting of faculty is salvation, liberty to learn is the only way of it. We must be absolutely free, Sanchia. Salvation demands it, our manhood expects it of us. We started, mind you, free enough: all our hamper is of our own making. But we've never been free since we were turned out of Eden in the days before the Flood.

Consider old Charnock, Squire of Graseby—is he free? God pity the poor! he's the veriest shackled slave in this land of slaves. You are all slaves, you know: your sublime Lady Mauleverer (who fancies herself a slave-owner, bless her!); you, my poor dear child, qualifying for your yoke; your respected Parson Twisden (squire and parson by shifts)—all the lot of you, Sanchia, but with a difference. Some of you can't help yourselves. My lady was bought by the late Sir Giles, who was himself a descendant of slaves from the time of the biggest slave of them all, the late William Conqueror; and she was sold by her father to him for thirty (or thirty-two) pieces of an escutcheon and a country-seat thrown in. And she was a good girl in those days, and did as she was bid—besides, Sir Giles was a fine figure of a man, I hear. You are a slave for the same reasons—goodness and girlhood. Why, you've only just been allowed to put up your hair! And your Reverend Twisden? Well, he put his neck under

the yoke of the Church with great intention. It was deliberate; he knew very well what he was doing; I admire him for it. He'd be the first to admit the slavery. Service which is perfect freedom, he'd say. I don't agree with him. According to me, we are all priests for ever after the order of Melchisedek; but I'm a sort of Quaker, you know —a pagan Quaker, or a quaking Pagan, whichever you please. No! I don't agree with him at all. I disapprove of your reverend friend. But I respect him mightily, all the same—and here's his very good health!

But old Roger Charnock, M.P., J.P., D.L.—out upon the hobbled wretch! He's done it himself from the start, and has no one but himself to thank for it. I've seen him at it all along, watched him from the playground to the hulks—the gilded hulks in which he now sweats. Rugby doesn't count, though he was in the Sixth, and a swell. At Cambridge he was a jolly chap (as he is now, confound him!), quite an easy-going, God-bless-you kind of a man, with a taste for prehistoric remains which might easily have developed into a passion. He took a second in history, and was going off to Petersburg to study under Vinogradoff. But what did he do instead? Articled himself to a brewer! and when his father died and left him a thousand or two, what next but he must buy the brewer out. It was a rotten concern, I believe, and he got it for a song. Well, that was the end of him; he set to work to 'build up his fortune.' You might put it that he set to work to brick himself up in a great house. God

help him now! he was at it from dawn to midnight, slaving and driving slaves. He starved himself, wouldn't look at the pretty girl he was fond of, and who was fond of him, too; took no days off, forgot his barrows and tumuli; thought of nothing but beer-shops and how he could rope 'em in: a foreclosure here, an advance there, here a little and there a little; nor did he rest until he had every poor devil within a thirty mile of Graseby under his arrogant old purple thumb. He 'got on,' as they say; bought land; built little painty villas for his dependents to rent of him; was what they call a just landlord, which means that he abated a man a fiver a year if he saw that by doing so he would get a tanner out of him later on. Then he married into the house of Badlesmere and became one of the Salt of the Earth. Salt! Yes, indeed, an irritant poison.

What did he get? What was his price? I'll tell you. He got a country-house five times too big for any reasonable man, with as many rooms in it as there are days in the month. He could have slept in a new bed every night for three weeks if he had pleased. And that did please him vastly. And he got all the rest of his glories after that. J.P. came next—easily; and they all followed—M.P., D.L., M.F.H. They say he's to be sheriff this year. There are the Privy Council and a Peerage ahead of old Roger: he's got his eye on 'em. Lord Graseby, eh? Viscount, Earl, Marquis of Graseby, Duke of—— I believe there's only one county left to be duke of, and that Flint. Duke of Flint—and well named, for

a party petrified to the heart. Wicked old Roger, whom I protest I still love, for all I chasten him.

Now, do you see how the fellow's tied himself up—like one of his own beer-shops? He has tied up his morals absolutely. I don't mean in the cheap sense that he can't live in splendour and ease unless people get drunk. That's true, but refers to the vulgar notion of morals, as meaning good morals. (Morality doesn't mean good morals at all. It means customs. Very bad customs may be very good morals to some nations, and 't other way about. The only really good morality, common to all people, consists in being true to yourself.) But I mean that he can't follow his own bent. He can't have a single motion of the mind unless public opinion backs him up. Hopeless! Can he punch a man's head? Of course not: he'd be liable to appear before his own bench. And he's chairman! Can he lie down under hedge on a starry night in summer and sleep beneath the stars? An excellent custom, according to me, but bless you, the scandal! Can he walk down Bond Street on a July noon with his coat off? Not without a crowd at his heels, and I've done it half-a-dozen times. Can he delve? There's forty stalwart gardening men to know the reason why. Can he pass the time of day with a railway-guard, bus-conductor, crossing-sweeper, gipsy-woman, all first-rate authorities in their own arts? Not without an apparatus of curtseyings, forelock-pullings, tip-expectations, moppings and mowings which smother his manhood up in a silly halo, pulled from the backs of the might-be

honest creatures he's with. Upon my soul, Sanchia, did you ever dream of such wretchedness as this? Cribbed, cabined, confined—why, if the man plays golf he must have another at his heels to carry his toys about! Why, if the man's hungry he must wait until two others have put on plush breeches and brass-buttoned coats, and spread the table, and called in Tomkins (the flap-cheeked, elephant-eared Tomkins) to approve, and to tell him heavily, ‘Luncheon is served, sir.’ And then he'll have one tall fellow to fill his plate, and another to take it away again; and neither of them, for their lives, will dare give him anything to drink when he's a-thirst, because, if they did, Tomkins would be drawing a hundred and fifty a year and nothing to show for it. Oh, wretched, wretched, hobbled, crippled, groping old Charnock! Now do you see why I have renounced my patrimony, and live at my ease, as my wits choose? Now do you think me a madman? I vow to you, Queen Mab, I think myself the second wisest man on earth. The first wisest has been dead some years. His name was Epictetus; and he was neither M.P., J.P., nor D.L. Nor did he marry into the house of Badlesmere.

But he's happy, the old sand-blind rascal, you'll tell me. I reply, of course the fellow's *snug*; and as he has a superficies (the only thing left him which he shares with me, I suppose), when you stroke him he's pleased. His hunters and hounds stroke him, no doubt; caps off from the lads, bobs from the lasses, stroke him. There's a lot of pretty tickling done when a great policeman

holds up the traffic from Victoria to Westminster Bridge, in order that Charnock, M.P., may walk unhindered to the House. Oh, yes, if you tickle him, he can still purr, I grant you. If that's happiness, he's happy.

He tickles himself too, or gets his haberdasher to tickle him. I was watching him the other day when we were all there. You remember how you and I got sick of the golfing talk and went off over the lake, and pretended we were lost? Well, before we broke loose, after luncheon, on the terrace, I was watching the old chap, with his fat cigar well alight, and his coffee and old brandy (which are very bad for his liver, and he knows it) at his elbow. I wonder if you saw it all: I did—in a flash. There he sat, you know, quite the prosperous, clean Englishman—a great buck in his way—in his good clothes, neatest boots, *point device* all over, absolutely nothing wrong. His blue flannels! His small black satin tie under the flawless collar; the pearl pin; the brown shoes! Exquisite cut those shoes, brogued, and with a surface like old lacquer. His valet, he tells me, is worth his weight in paper. Superb, prosperous creature; tickling himself, and purring hard. It was his silk sock which was the crowning touch to his happiness: I saw that—in a flash. Cornflower blue, you may have noticed, with little gold threads meandering up his calf. It fitted like a skin, showed off his wicked old ankle to a nicety. The high light came on the bone and gleamed like a satiny rose-petal. Neatness, daintiness itself! Strokable! You couldn't help

stroking it. I wanted to, myself. That was his purring-point.

I saw him watch it, turn his foot about to catch the light; then he pulled deeply at his cigar, sighed his contentment, crossed his leg and clasped that jolly ankle—and purred and purred! No trace of snobbery, mind. He didn't want any one else to admire or envy. He's not low—not a bit. No. He liked it to be there, to be sure of its perfectness, to feel that it was all of a piece with the rest of him—with Bill Hill, with Grosvenor Gardens, the House of Commons, with the horses in the loose-boxes, and the great landau and silver-harnessed pair of browns. It was a finishing touch, a corner-stone, bless him! So let us sing, Happy, happy, happy Charnock! He's got his reward—worked hard and ta'en his wages. Now let him order his tomb in St. Praxed's Church, and his life's work's done. No, no! I forgot the peerage.

Esau, being hungry as a hunter, sold his birth-right for porridge. The thing was done in a minute; he yielded to the passion of hunger, and was none the worse, because a full meal doesn't root you for ever to the glebe. And his birthright—flocks and herds and wives, mostly—was, if he had only known it, a birth-wrong. But Roger, if you'll forgive a vile pun, has bartered his manhood for *purrage*—for a landau and pair, and the rest; the girl he loved (such a nice girl, too) for a daughter of the house of Badlesmere, and the rest of *that*; the teaching of his own sons for a deer park and pack of hounds; and his digestion

for a great table, three men-servants, and a French cook with a temper. He had a brain, and has condescended it to low cunning; he had sinews, and has coated them with lard. He might have climbed the heights, and he gets carried up in a landau. He might have made his boys his friends; but he sends 'em to Eton, and teaches 'em to look on him as a paymaster. He can do nothing whatever that he has a mind to unless he can coax his neighbours to admire him for doing it; and the moment they carry their admiration to the point of copying him, he wants to do something else, and must coax 'em again. And you think I'm a madman for not copying that way of life! You don't, my dear; I won't believe it. I'm an angel of light compared to old Roger. Upon my soul, I'm a superior person, though I've only got three pairs of trousers to my name.

The dawn is here and shames my rage. I ought to thank God that I'm alive and free as air, instead of blaspheming Him for letting other wretches live also. The sun has risen out of the North Sea, and all the little eager waves of the Wash are on fire at the edges. The air is wondrous mild—as tremulous and close to tears as a convalescent child. I wish—I wish—I wish that one dear child was here to watch the pearly wonder of this dawn with me. No, I don't; I swear I don't. It's not going to last; it will rain before eight o'clock, and I shall be squelching through miry Norfolk on my way to Ely. But while it lasts it's too awfully beautiful for words. A filmy wonder:

Aurora, new out of bed, wistful after her dreams.
(That's rather pretty.)

I shan't go to bed at all: it's too good. I shall swim in the gilded sea while the coffee is a-making, then paint what I can remember of this astounding glory; and then shove along through the soak to Ely. There ought to be a letter for me there. Address me 'care of Mrs. Webster, basket-maker.' She lives in a caravan, and smokes a pipe; but she's an honest woman. She shaves twice a week.

Good-bye, Sanchia. Don't think me mad, and remember me in your prayers.

Leagues of marsh cotton here—exquisite clouds of burnt silver. And samphire—like wet emerald!

SECOND LETTER

ON PAN AND THE NYMPHS

[*This letter was written from Chancionbury Ring—that beacon of the Sussex Downs, a favourite haunt of the writer’s—apparently in the summer. It is by no means the immediate successor of my first selection, but has been chosen as containing a more or less reasoned statement of my friend’s views upon a matter of universal concern. Again, it explains itself, and needs little more preface from an editor than this. It is addressed to a young girl, whose beliefs and opinions are necessarily derived from those who have had the right to teach her, by one who has long been accustomed to think for himself. What I consider admirable in it is the way in which respect for her faith is combined with independence of personal judgment. It is a fine plea for toleration.*]

CHANCTONBURY,
A White Morning.

Your letter—oh!
Thank you, Sanchia.

The postmistress at Steyning handed it me yestere’en with a smile. “Tis from a leddy simmingly,’ quod she. But ‘Madam,’ said I, ‘tis from *the lady*’—and made her perfectly happy. The moon rose full and orange over the shoulder of Wolstonbury as I broke the seal. Halfway up the borstal road, through the wood, I lit a match and read till I burnt my fingers. When I was at

home, snug in the Ring, I read it all. A fair script, Sanchia, guarded, temperate, extraordinarily Greek (for you *are* Greek, you know; your mean is pure gold—whereas I, for all my lore, remain an incurable Romantick. I prefer it with a k): I admire what I can never attain—and so we grow; there's no other way.

I shan't tell you how often I've read it, nor what I've done with it.

Yes, I will, by George, lest you are tempted to vanity. I've burned it with fire. I made one on the lee side of the Ring, out of driftwood and bracken. They might have seen it from Cissbury, and perhaps They did—whoever They may be. I put the document in a match-box, the match-box in a crock, and when you were reduced to fine silky black ash (such a pretty ash burned Sanchia makes—glossy as a top hat, and her writing a deeper black upon the black) I took you on to the barrow of some dead Briton and scattered you to the four airts. Subtilised essence of Queen Mab now permeates the Weald. Sussex thrills.

Your news is good. I'm glad you are hard at work with your paint-box, and, as you say, learning to do without me. There's a back-handed compliment in that which I like from my only correspondent. Also it shows that we can afford to tell each other the truth, which is a full-faced compliment indeed. When all's said, friendship has nothing to do with greetings and partings—and this island contains us both. You can always find me—if you want to; or I can find *you*, which is the same thing, I believe.

Now to the point, which I like and don't like. I knew you'd be at me one day or another; I've been dreading it, and now it's come. Oh, but I must dedicate myself 'to the Maiden of the Country,' as Antipater of Sidon called the likes of you once. And so it happens that a recent encounter comes pat to the pen. Listen then, Sanchia. . . .

I met a fool in the forest—or on the forest fringes, as we may call Ditchling Heath. There, upon the open heath as I lay, he came up and accosted me, tract in hand.

I was frying a mid-day rasher, always a nice business with me. After the customary allusions to the weather, which was perfect, he offered me his tract. The title was *Clean your Dirty Windows*. He called it 'my little book,' but wasn't the author. He was a fool all the same.

The effect of his tract—for, being very busy, I asked him to give me a digest—was, that you could not see God unless you cleaned your soul's windows. He told me that, and I said, 'Of course you can't.' He said, 'There's more than that in my little book'; and I replied, looking warily up from my frying-pan, 'I'm sure there must be, because that's a platitude.' I was rather cropped with the man, and like him for not being nettled. He said, 'Don't let me interrupt your repast'; and I said that he wouldn't—and would he share it? He declined, but still stood his ground. I had nothing to say—and said it. He didn't seem to be put about.

All was going well, when I was thoughtless

enough to pour some of my beer on the ground—a trick of mine, as you know—and to explain it as a libation to Pan and the Nymphs. Like all dullards, incapable of laughter, he suspected mockery where none assuredly was. He looked at me, raising his eyebrows, and said sickly, ‘You make a jest of these things?’ By Heaven, but he angered me. I fell upon him tooth and claw, spared neither age (he was no younger than me) nor sex (and he was neuter). I asked him roundly how he dared, as a gentleman and a scholar, so talk of another religion, and that of such a people? Preposterous in me! But I didn’t see why he should have the monopoly of attack. Moreover, I hadn’t talked to a living soul for twenty-four hours, and I supposed that his lived.

He tried the high horse, but I pulled him off it, and we fought on foot. ‘Pray,’ said he, ‘do you presume to declare yourself seriously an acceptor of Greek mythology?’ Ass that he was! But I had to answer him according to his asininity. I observed that he was forsaking the point of quarrel, which had concerned my challenge of his temerity, not his of mine. His had asked, Did I jest about religion? I put it to him that he ought to see the futility of his question by the way I had framed mine. ‘If you, good sir,’ I said, ‘are troubled with the possibility of my worship of Pan and the Nymphs, why should you resent it if I deplore yours of Whomsoever it may be?’ I went on to assure him that I didn’t deplore it at all, but hinted that there were many millions in this world of thinking men who would and did; and

that some had gone to the bonfire and others had drawn the sword solely because they deplored it. I added that, as a matter of statistics, the majority of his fellow-subjects in this empire deplored it profoundly. We parted, I may tell you, better friends.

I said too much and talked like a prig, I know —your letter, Sanchia, and the holy influences of this place reprove me; but I loathe your glib precisian like poison, and he angered me. For that matter, the most intolerant man I ever knew, without exception, was an uncle of mine, one Simon Battersby, explicitly a Free Thinker. His glory was in his freedom from dogma, and yet the old man was bound and gagged by one. His dogma was, that it was wicked to go to church; and if any one belonging to him did it, he was morally shocked. The end of him was this. All his children went High Church, and one became a Roman Catholic priest. He cut them, one by one, out of his will; refused them, one by one, his hospitality. Poor, horrible old galley-hand! Another yoked slave for you to add to your collection.

I don't go to church often myself, because I can't be so aware of high God within four walls as I can out of doors; yet I am very capable of believing that a common symbol of moral direction and a common focussing-point for the emotions are valuable things. Take the roof off your church or knock a wall down and I'm with you directly. The God for me is old Terminus, a Roman God. He alone of many, when the whole Latin hierarchy

were asked whether they would resign their altars in favour of a new-comer, one Jove, said that he would not. He was, you must know, a three-cornered old post, who stood in the Forum and served as a boundary. This made him extremely important. So they had to give him an altar in the Temple of Capitoline Jove, and as he insisted that he could only be worshipped in the open air, were forced to leave a hole in the roof for him. That's why the Pantheon is open to the sky to this day. Brave old Terminus! But give me the sky if I am to see God. Wasn't it Wendell Holmes who said that he didn't approve of growing oaks in flower-pots? Wise man—making proverbs, like Polonius. It's by no means that I mind the people—unless they have their best clothes on, which they don't on week-days. I think that a crowd really awed by a Presence is a moving experience—and the emotion is catching. You get that abroad, in southern France (at the Saintes-Maries, for instance), notably in Russia. Once, in Moscow, I saw an ikon being exhibited to the people: it's done once in a blue moon. The square was packed, a sea of white faces (the Russians are ghastly white, all like ghosts)—all turned one way. Every eye fixed, every mouth open. The priests came out, a gorgeous, absorbed throng of them; and we all quivered. Then there was a hush like death, while certain juggleries, bowings, and signings were doing among them. We all had our eyes intent upon the Thing under a gold veil. The Thing was lifted up, flashed naked for a minute. Every soul there fell prone

to the earth, myself included, I can tell you; and the Spirit of God brooded over Moscow for a space of time. Wonderful! If you want that kind of thing, or anything like it, in our country you must go to the trooping of the colour on the Queen's Birthday. It's all we have left of a national religion—absolutely all. And a fine thing it is.

My own particular, personal thrill, to be got within four walls, comes to me in a Cathedral (which must be Anglican for the purpose), when they are singing evensong in a shut choir, and there's a handful of people in the nave—a hushed tourist or so, some faithful enthusiast whose day is crowned by such ceremonial, and a sprinkling of holy women—nurses, nuns, or whatever. You hear a mumbled lesson, or guess at it; then there's a pause of preparation and suspense. Then, out of the grey stillness, a boy's voice goes spearing and trembling up; and you forget all about the shock-headed rogue in his tumbled surplice, and believe for a few blessed moments that he is quiring with the young-eyed cherubim. So he is, and so may *you* be, while you can believe it. And there's the secret out.

A poet said—

God first made man, and straightway man made God,
and spoke profound truth in his little chirpy
paradox. That's why, for me, all religion is
true, and each religion false. Each of them
will exclude all the others—like the jealous
Hebrews of old time, or Mahomet with a Koran

in one hand and a scimitar in the other for *nous autres*; like our friend of Tarsus, who has much to answer for; yes, my dear, and like the Brad-laughs and Ingersolls of our day, or my spluttering old Uncle Simon, who used to gnash his wicked gums at the church-going bell, and stoke the fires of a Gehenna of his own for the likes of your brave and reverend Parson Twisden, and your own dear obsequious head, bowed in a fair place to a fair emblem of God the Father in God the Son.

I don't know that I ought to talk to you of these things. I never have yet, you'll allow. And yet I'm deadly serious over it, and in the vein—and you know that I've too much respect for my own store of Poesy ever to breathe a tarnish on yours. One is so contrived, I think, that one can't hurt a soul without hurting one's own. Shall I go on? In all reverence, I shall.

The indisputable fact, as I take it to be, that every man must make God in his own image assures me that every man also makes Him aright. I am prepared to accept the handiwork of any honest man who goes a-God-making. Others, of whom there aren't so many as you might think, don't count. Every man is honest, and every woman good, when in love; and you can't make a God unless you love him first. When you are in love, Sanchia, as I hope you will be some day (and I there to rejoice in the sight), all the loveliest things you ever dreamed of or have distilled out of the million things you have come up against will go into what you love. For you won't love a man so much as the image you make out of

him and yourself; and so surely as you have made your own God, so surely (Heaven be with you!) you will make your lover. All that he will provide will be a peg for you to hang your garlands and fair draperies upon. The fairer your good thoughts, the happier your good experiences, the nobler will he show up for your bedecking of his pegship. He will be your fairest work of art, Sanchia; and unless I'm partial—which is absurd, of course—he ought to be a very goodly sight. I tell you, I want to see the fellow.

If Religion is not that, then I am an ass. It's pure Poetry, I believe; the best thing you can make, made out of the best things you have collected, and passed through your mind *at its best*. There are such a lot of them too! The flush of dawn—there'll be a lot of that still wonder in your God; the wrath of a storm; music; the rhythm (endless, world without end) of running water; children's voices; an old man blessing a young one; a young man louting to an old one (a beautiful thing); a windless evening in autumn, when the sky is translucent violet, fainting to white, and the moon rides out, colour of an old coin; the sun on a brown hill; hares at play in young corn; a mother cat in lazy ease (all her troubles over), gravely watching her kittens, and purring entire contentment; any mother of any baby, and any father of any fine young man ready to go out into the world; any girl with her sweetheart, any boy on his first adventure; day and night; rain; spring sounds—lambs in the pasture, the cuckoo

over the copse; the sea asleep and the sea in a rage,—out of these wonders, O Sanchia, you have made Him you worship, and will one day make him you are to cherish. There's no need to separate them, they are indistinguishable. And well for us that it is so. Who, what poet, do you suppose, first saw God in the Sacrament? Why, a Greek of course, who saw more in wine than a fermented liquor, and more in wheaten bread than flour and water. ‘The earth and its store’ went into those emblems. They received, who did receive, more than a breakfast who took that morning meal. The Greek was a metaphysician as well as a poet; but he was more poet than metaphysician. Plato used to deal with Goodness, Temperance, and Justice as if they were crystal forms, to be weighed and handled; so did the rest of his race. The Word of God incarnate, under their conduct of the notion, was to be got, whole and entire, in a flake of white bread.

And who showed us God in the Mother and Child? Why, the Romans, of course, who knew by their need what a Mother was and what a Son should be. They knew that there lay our tap-root—for we are earthy of the earth: wife and child, hearth and roof-tree, you know. You and I are neither spouses nor parents, but I suppose we learned the truth of that from our mothers' laps.

I don't think that we, as a race, have done Christianity much but harm. We might have been better left to our Wotan, Fricka, and Frey. But Christ's religion started as a pure Anarchy, and we've got it down to a rigid Oligarchy. It started

as pure Emotion, and we've turned it into a code of Ethics. It was Poetry, we've made it sticky Prose. It was everything in this world and the next; it is now a negligible thing here; and as to elsewhere, we are beginning to be cautious how we believe in that. Now, the moment you turn poetry into prose you begin to tell lies. That's odd, but perfectly true.

But we live in herds in these days; we huddle in fenced cities or round a great man's house; we build ships of war and train hosts of young men how to shoot each other in order that we may huddle the snugger, and be sure that Hans, or Alphonse, or Wilbur K. don't come and huddle here too. And so religion has got socialised and become a national affair. Hence the Trooping of the Colour and many honest tears.

Men will die for that sort of religion, too, and kill their neighbours for not agreeing with them. It becomes a question of patriotism, don't you see—with this odd result, that if you want to see any religion at its best nowadays, you must go into a country where it isn't recognised. Those who have it are on their mettle there. Look at the Catholics with us in England, and try to realise what they must have been like before the Reformation. Sleek and stodgy and sly. Look at the Protestants in Ireland. As for our blessed fellow-countrymen, if you want to see them truly religious, and meaning it from the bottom of their hearts, go and see them at church on the verandah of a Swiss hotel—in their black coats and pressed trousers—all the women in gloves; and the curate,

who was in knickerbockers on Saturday and will be in them on Monday, saying, 'Dearly beloved Brethren' in a throaty voice which, thank the Lord! he will lose all the rest of the week. That's *us*, my dear, very nearly at our absurd best, and how absurd it is I despair of showing. If you want to see us at our very best, you must go to the Trooping of the Colour.

The Trooping of the Colour! And that silly ass who thought that Pan was a joke of mine! I hope I don't make such bad jokes as that.

Now, with those colours in his mind, who dares to say that Pan and the Nymphs are not? No countryman, I'll go bail. Who said, Pan is dead? Some fawning rogue who wanted to pay a compliment. Pan dead! He is not dead, and will never die. Wherever there's a noonday hush over the Weald, wherever there's mystery in the forest, there is Pan. Every far-sighted, unblinking old shepherd up here afield with his dog knows all about him, though he'll never tell you anything of what he knows. He hasn't got his name right, very likely; but he has got *him*. Every oak tree hides a Dryad; the Oreads foot it on the heath, and the Nereids cling to the wet rocks where the green water lips their backs and surges up over their slippery shoulders. Surely, in a world of wonders, there's room and to spare for the Souls of Things, seen only by poets, but felt by all country people. And what of Artemis? Well, you know what I think about

her. So long as youth is clean and quick and eager, so long will Artemis the Bright fleet along the hill-tops—and that will be for ever and ever, the Lord be praised! People with souls know these things, and people without souls don't count. They must be born again.

I sometimes think that the root of our disease lies in our bloated bodies; and then I think that it's in our stifled minds. Really, I believe it's much of a muchness. We deceive ourselves because we want to. We prefer lies, on the whole, to truth. We like luxury so much that we are content to be bound hand and foot by it; we are such slaves to sentiment that we would go to the stake for things which are palpably false and absurd. In a sense, you can't believe too much, and can't have a too receptive mind. Who supposes that I decry belief in the supernatural? Why, I hardly believe in anything else. The supernatural only means the soul of the natural—absolutely no more than that. And who's ashamed to say that he believes in miracles? Miracles! Why, everything is a miracle. Life, Death, sunrise, the opening rose, the wind in the pines. Is Art no miracle? Poetry? Dear God! And if it be true, as your physic-monger says it is, that Art and Poetry are the result of the fermenting or not of certain alimentary juices, and that the real question is one for the liver—then the miracle is the more astounding. Pray, what does it matter to the lover whether he cries out that his heart or his liver is afire? The abiding

glory, the triumph and splendour of the world is that it *is* afire. My dear, he who writes to you now knows what he is talking about. He says, Believe all you can, but tell yourself no lies. Never say that you believe what you don't believe —or you'll come to grief. But he must write no more.

Address me P.O., Petersfield. Farewell, Sanchia, as the *Anthology* says, 'ten thousand times.'

Is there no Religion in this? 'To bristly-haired Pan and the Nymphs of the farmstead, Theodotus the shepherd lays this gift under the rock, because they stayed him when very weary under the parching summer, holding out to him honey-sweet water in their hands.'

THIRD LETTER

THE SECRET OUT

[I have now to make a jump of some months, though every time that I approach the brink I hesitate. There is much in the letters to be omitted which would be pleasant reading, a good deal which it seems injurious to Sanchia's candour to pass over. There's no doubt but that she was interested in what he had been telling her of his scheme of life and conduct. It must be in reply to her urgings that he promises to continue these discourses. Meantime he is deep in a score of pleasurable things: he tells her of them. 'Painting the impossible (of course!), conspiring with liberty-mongers in divers tongues, writing an article on Thoreau, mending the seat of my third-best (or first-worst) pair of bags: there's for this 3rd of July.' He sends her three packed sheets from the New Forest about horticulture, which he is coming to consider as, 'next to music,' the most sensitive of the fine arts. 'Properly allied to architecture,' says he, 'garden-making is as near as a man may get to the divine function. Music always excepted, mind you. That's our highest point of transcendency—and it's very odd that one has to be pretty near to what the base world calls a fool to be any good at that. There's a sidelight on the man at the street corner for you—or on the square-faced man in the market-place, rather . . .'

When he finds himself in Vernditch Bottom in October he is in another vein. Sanchia is in London—'ninety miles away, as the machinists reckon spaces'; but he would have her remember that space is as much of a convention as time. 'So you may be as near me as you please, Queen Mab; and the nearer the better, say I.' But he contradicts himself in the next paragraph, which shows that time and space have worked their witchery upon him.

He writes of 'a welter across Hants and Surrey—and I see your eyes.' Before his next letter, dated in November from Abbotsbury in Dorset, he has seen her in London. He now writes of 'our blissful se'nnight,' and then breaks off with a 'No more of that! I suffer, you suffer, thought suffers, the Kingdom of God on Earth suffers. There's a conjugation of a most irregular verb, and all because the Apostle of Freedom-in-a-Ditch turns flaneur for the sake of a pair of deep-blue eyes. No, Queen Mab, no! I'm happy to be over the hundred miles from the centre of my System. Anything under that silly figure seems to me next door—and then of course I run in to say "Good morning."' 'Why on earth should I want to see you?' he cries. 'Have I not the tongues of men and of angels, pen in hand? Who gets such piercing answers as I to my written catechisings? I scorn the man who depends upon lip-service, eye-service, or the touched hand for his soul's daily bread. At least, I hope I do.'

Shortly after this I take up the tale with this, my third selection. She has invited him to be explicit, and he becomes so.]

LAND'S END, *Christmas Day.*

A touch of frost in the air, enough to make it brown at the edges; a deathly calm over the sea. The surging of the main is as faint as a sleeper's breath, just a rhythm of rise and fall. Out on the smooth water flocks of sea-birds float, their heads under their wings. Not a breath of air. I heard the church bell of Saint Ives this morning distinctly, calling the faithful to seven o'clock sacrifice. I could almost believe it was Saint Botolph's calling you. Truly, I *did* think so, and grew excited and fantastic. I bowed the knee to the Great God Terminus, calculated the variation of the clock between Marylebone and Marazion, and followed your devotions faithfully from 'You that do truly and earnestly' to 'The peace of God.' I'm a fool, you know, exulting in his foolishness.

And then I re-read your Christmas letter, which I got yesterday, and perpended your questions—such a string of them! What's my secret? Can no one learn it? Am I to be the Second Wisest Man on Earth, and is nobody to be the Wisest Woman? Won't I tell you how I manage to be happy? What's my way of salvation? *Et cetera.* *Et cetera.*

Oh, it's ridiculous that it should be a secret at all; it's humiliating that it should be hard to learn. I'm ashamed of myself sometimes (when the old time-serving Adam lifts up his bruised head and gibbers at me) that I should be so happy and the rest of the world so miserable; but then I sit up and shake my fist at my countrymen, and rail at them. 'Blind, deaf, dumb brutes that ye are! (Hear me reprove this generation.) All my shame is for you. Clogged by filthy things about the feet—your money, sham honour, sloth, vanity, gluttony; clogged by sticky things about the heart, and stodgy things about the head—your respect for what is unvenerable in age, your fear of immortal youth, your misdoubt of your neighbour's worthless judgment—how can I be other than ashamed of you, who have but to straighten your backs and lift your hands, and say, We are men, to find out that you are so?' And reflecting that that, simply, is the conclusion of the whole matter, such heat becomes absurd. The thing has but to be stated, you would say. No, no. They don't know it, because they won't. They have lived so long on lies that they'd starve on truth. Well, well, let 'em wallow, tied by the leg in their

stytes. But if I were autocrat I'd make it penal for any one to have more than a hundred and fifty a year; and to him who could do on a hundred I'd resign the throne as to the wisest of us.

The Many must change and pass as best they can; but to you, who are of the Elect, asking me how one is to be free, I'll tell you—there's only one way. Whether you desire to be free, to live at large on this jolly green earth, or free to have your conversation in heaven, there's only one way. You *are* free, really. All right then: act as if you were. Drop all the rest; walk away from it into the Open Country. Fields of England, Elysian fields—there are no hedges. Forsake all and go there. Take nothing with you—nothing, nothing. Upon my solemn word of honour, *that's all*.

Why, take my own case. Here am I, ordinary third son of ordinary English parents: father an alderman; mother a clergyman's daughter; brothers at the bar or the Stock Exchange (one at Lloyd's); sisters flirting with curates or going to mothers' meetings; nothing more entirely of the staple to be conceived; different, in fact, from my kindred only in this, that I lead a free life while they are fast bound to misery and iron. And I'll tell you the ins and outs of it now—on this quiet morning, on this quiet cliff, looking over that sleeping sea. You are entitled to them, since you are become part of them; you, Sanchia, with your quiet ways and wondering, wonderful eyes. . . .

It was at Cambridge that I found out what a fool I was teaching myself to be. From 1881 to

1884 (which was my third year) it had been gradually dawning upon me, I suppose, though it came with a rush at the end. Before that I had been the bird's-nesting schoolboy of common acquaintance. True, I had always been fond of Greek and couldn't help drawing—but that was literally all I was to the good.

I don't know just how or why I found out what I had to do, if I was to justify myself to myself. In spite of myself I suppose that I was discovering that everything you bought with money tied you up, more or less, to that thing; and that the fun you got out of the thing that you bought was as nothing compared to the freedom you lost by getting it. That must have been a cerebral process unawares; but one morning, anyhow, I woke up outraged by the ceiling of my room, shocked at the four walls of it. I seemed to be strangling; I thought that they were closing in upon me. Shades of the prison-house, saith he! Yes, old Wordsworth, but the growing boy don't know that they are there, and so they ain't; but the growing man does. From that hour I panted for breathing-room, and found that every blessed thing I touched, and called mine, was so much clog-and-hamper. The four walls of the Nine-and - Thirty Articles seemed more deadly than brick and mortar; and ahead of me I could see, yawning like a grave, the black hull of Dingeley Main Colliery, where I was to toil in order to imprison myself yet more tightly; whither I was surely bound, one of a manacled file of convicts, hounded on by the shocking necessity of being

'settled down.' Settled down! Devilish formula, which condemns us, generation after generation, to vegetate—and rot—and rot!

I chucked everything, as you know. I walked out, I disappeared. I walked, as a matter of fact, to King's Lynn, and got there lateish. I found a solemn-looking buster in an inn-yard ruminating over an ostler at his horse, and jingling half-crowns in his breeches pockets. That was the rhythm of his life—'Property, property, property'; but he was better than he seemed—had a kink in him somewhere which saved him. We got talking. He was a good sort, with a humorous twist on his long face, and a good twinkle in his heavy eye. Presently I said, 'I'll tell you what. It's time for dinner. I'll toss you who dines the other.' He looked at the ground, then at me—heavily. Then he said with tremendous solemnity, 'Done with you, codger.' We tossed with one of his half-crowns, three times, and I won. That was a friendly turn (one of many) done me by Pan and the Nymphs, or by Artemis Einodië, *Our Lady of the Ways*; for I give you my word I hadn't a stiver nearer than Cambridge. 'I've lost, it appears,' says the chap. I said, 'You've lost more than appears, for I lunched off a turnip.' He was a sportsman, though, and did the thing as well as could be. We sat talking till long past midnight; and I was his guest for bed and breakfast.

Next day I was on the North Sea in a trawler, working my way out—and infernally ill, by the way. We were four days going over; but they

put me ashore in North Holland, and I tramped to Alkmaar.

I nearly starved in that country—you see, I didn't know the language; but the weather was superb, and I went through all right into Germany. There I knew I could get on, because I had things to give them which they wanted. Germany is the best country in Europe in which to go to market with your knowledge. They really want it off you, you see. I stayed in a little town called Wissening for three months or so, at pedagogy. I gave lessons in English and Greek, and earned nearly five pounds one way and another. That gave me what I was bound to have (and what I had at Cambridge too; only I was on my mettle, don't you see, and wouldn't send for anything. I wasn't going to communicate with England until I could report that I was keeping myself)—I mean colours, and boards, and some brushes, and all that. I got these in Berlin, and pen and ink too; and then I set to work, and never had to look back. I've kept myself ever since, and will take credit for this, moreover, that I've been wise enough never to earn more than I want, or to save anything. Directly you do either of those things, say I, you drive a peg through your foot into the ground, and you root. Sick? Of course I've been sick, and mighty sorry for myself. But I've skirmished through somehow; and people have been very good. They are, you know; nearly everybody is very good. One of my maxims is that there are no such things as nations; and another that every man is worth

shaking hands with for something or other. (I've proved 'em both.) My worst time was in Siberia, where a woman of no character whatever, according to the wiseacres of this world, proved to me that she had a great deal. Anna was her name—Anna Marievna. She would have nourished me with her blood, good soul, if she'd had any. But blood was at famine prices: the Russians took care of that.

All that was in '84-5; and here we are ten years on, and I've been as happy as the days are long ever since, and as free as a bird of the air. Looking back on it, I'm surprised at two things only—the deadliness of the disease and the simplicity of the remedy. Why every mother's son of us don't do it beats me altogether. Poverty, Temperance, and Simplicity—these three. But the greatest of these is Poverty. That's what I and the Socialists will have to fight about. They want everybody to be rich, and I say that they are aiming then at murder and suicide.

If you come to think out, really, how you grow, mentally, morally, and physically, you'll find that you do it by wanting things. They are above you, out of reach; you want them very badly; they won't come to you; so you grow until you can reach them. Then—strange thing!—when you have them, when they are under your hand, you learn that (without knowing it) you have been enjoying them all the time you were growing after them—your growth, in fact, consisting in that—and that consequently you don't want them at all, but rather desire, and must

by all means have, those other things up there, still higher up and just out of reach. So you go on craving, and go on growing and reaching up; and up and up you grow until presently you find yourself at the top of all your desires except one. By that time you are too old to grow any more, and only want to go to sleep. And behold! there at the top sits friendly Death, with a warming-pan.

Broadly speaking, that's the process. And take notice that there's no healthy condition, and no happiness whatsoever, unless we do grow. No happiness whatsoever, O Sanchia, unless we grow every hour of our lives. That's as sure as Fate. Think it out; knit your brows over it, and you'll see.

That's the first thing to keep in your mind, my dear, when you're about considering what you want and how you're to get it. What you really want out of life is ability to develop—to grow. Now, it's plain enough, I hope, that you can't want things which you've got already, or can get in exchange for money or privilege; and that you can't reach after things if some hireling is for ever ready to put them in your lap. Consequently, if you have money, or the privilege of class, being born, as they profanely say, with a gold spoon in your mouth, you can't be healthy, because you can't grow. I hope that's a point in favour of Destitution. It ought to be, to the candid mind.

I don't want to write a treatise; but I'm very keen on all this—and anyhow it's your fault. The

next thing you want—and it's the same thing—is to be happy. I should like to know who doesn't want to be happy? Now that, they say, is a relative state. And yet it's not, you know. There's really only one state of happiness, since Process and not Rest is the law of this world, and that's Acquisition. Possession isn't happiness at all. Possession is static, Acquisition ecstatic. So long as this world spins and wheels round the sun, so long shall we be at our best when we conform, and spin on our own axis, and wheel round the Sun of our Desire. To have a thing cannot be blissful, but to have had it may be, and to be about to have it exquisite joy. The past should be lovely, and the future must be so. The present (and there's no such thing really. Everything flows, said the Sage, and even as he said it the moment had gone)—the present is merely a breath: time for a flash of reminiscence or preparation, and then on you go. Present possession, therefore, is a delusion; and if it were a real thing, as some fools try so hard to make it, consciousness of it would only be contentment—not happiness. Contentment is a swinish thing. The man who is content has done growing, and will immediately begin to rot—like a bulb—unless you start him growing afresh.

Oh, take an illustration, which comes pat just now, while K—— and Co. are bellowing about our greatness, and all-red maps of Empire. Heaven about us, here's a confusion of thought—muddy brainwork! Hear them befoul the 'Little Englanders,' my dear soul; by which term they are

pleased to refer to the Englander before the Empire—the man, I'll trouble you, of the Armada and the days before Waterloo. Drake a Little Englander, Cromwell, Wolfe and Moore and Wellington, Little Englanders all. The heroes, according to these fellows, are the men who *have* an Empire, not the men who made it. It's heroic to possess a thing, eh? Who will teach 'em to think straight?

To have an Empire is not heroic at all. To have had one *may* be, to be getting one *may* be. We were a race of heroes from Crécy to Waterloo, but since then have been merely swine, grunting our contentment and repletion. We may be heroes again some day when we've done wallowing; but meantime persons who believe themselves patriots are doing all they know to stave off that day by heaping armaments and bluffing Europe. Heroes, we! Why, we've got degeneration of the heart. We're like Fat Women at a fair—at the best, curious, and rather disgusting. But all this is neither here nor there.

And now, if you'll tell me how we are to grow, or be happy, or get our faculties free unless we are poor, I shall be very much obliged to you, and will go back to the Dingey Main Colliery to-morrow, and wear a black coat, and pay taxes. But you can't—and nobody can.

Mind, Body, and Estate, Poverty is the only hope. Have nothing.

Have nothing—and you're thrown back on

what is inside you. That's your own, and all that's worth having.

Have nothing—and the broad world is your fee.

Have nothing—and you're neither clogged about the brain nor the feet.

Have nothing, and you have no looking-glass. Without a looking-glass you don't know what you look like; and if you don't know that, you cease to wonder whether your neighbour sees you as fine a fellow as you see yourself. Almost all our troubles in England come from that: we are awfully set up by the appearance we make to ourselves, and miserably apprehensive of the conclusions the rest are drawing of us. We daren't be ourselves, lest we be taken unawares, and Jones, or Jones's man, see us with our armour off. Did I ever tell you that I saw a Colonel of Light Horse walk down the Tornabuoni in Florence carrying a fish in newspaper under his arm? I did it though. Any country in Europe has more freedom than ours. Why? Because it has fewer looking-glasses.

'As having nothing, yet possessing all things.' I'm not very fond of the Levantine, but by George he was right there. And of course he was a magnificent sophist.

So now abide for you, Queen Mab, Poverty, Temperance, Simplicity—these three.. But the greatest of these is Poverty. For if you are poor you will find Temperance repay you; and since you can't afford a looking-glass, you will remain as simple as you are sweet.

By the bye, you mustn't take my short cut to

happiness, you know. Don't go off to King's Lynn, there's a dear. It led me near to knavery, I believe, when I tossed for a dinner. Keep you to the high-road, dear one, and shed your baggage by degrees. Ah, that broad high-road! If we two could share poverty, and hear the stars bid us good-night! If the great Open Country could be seen for a goodly heritage by two pair of eyes, and if two tongues could voice *Nunc Dimittis* at the last milestone! We live by growing, say I? And we are happy in aspiring? Yes, but to have had is good too; and I, *poverello*, have had something, Sanchia. Nay, nay, I have had good measure. And so farewell.

Here's a text for you, not from the *Anthology*, but from Epictetus, an antick sage. 'Think you,' says he, 'you can be a wise man, and continue to eat and drink and be wrathful, and take offences as you have been used? Nay, but you must watch and labour, my man, and withdraw yourself from your household, and be despised by any serving-boy, and be quizzed by your neighbours, and take the last place all the world over. . . . Consider these things,' he saith, 'whether you are willing at such a price to get Peace, Freedom, and an Untroubled Spirit. And if you are not, then attempt it not, nor, like a child, play now the philosopher, then the tax-collector, then the orator, then the Procurator of Cæsar. For these things agree not among themselves, and, good or bad, it behoves you to be One Man. You should be perfecting your power

over yourself, or over your outward snugness; spending yourself on the life within you, or on the life without. That is to say, you must take your place either among Men or Swine.'

A wise man that.

FOURTH LETTER

ON CIVILISATION

[The writer stayed out the winter at Land's End, engaged in the absorbing pursuit of naturalising Alpine plants upon the faces of rock there. He had much to tell Sanchia of this work of his—of his failure in past years and hopes for future. We read of Androsace lanuginosa, Draba aeizoides, of Lithospermum prostratum (a blue sheet of that), and of Ramondia pyrenaica, ‘that exquisite rosette of dark green and mauve, of which I can never have enough. Rejoice with me, Queen of Flowers and Faery. I have three—three!—self-sown plants of it, which will flower in April. I must be here to see; and it would be well that you were here also.’ His enthusiasm over this growing passion for transforming England by means of flowers goes well in hand with his social schemes. He had, in fact, discovered his life-work. ‘England a garden!’ he cries out in a letter to Sanchia, ‘and Englishmen the gardeners! I’ll die for that war-shout. Isn’t it finer than your All-red map, K——, Ch—— and Co.? Oh, men, throw down your big drums and concertinas; forsake your beanfeasts and city dinners; take up your spades and follow me! What is your bombast about, if not to make this panting country more fat and less able to move; its workmen richer and so more idle. Pah, you dullards, what’s worth having beside work?’ He turns to rend the opposite camp. ‘And you, trades unionists, with your eight hours’ day—do you know what you are about? You are slaying manhood, that’s what you’re doing. Every hour you get docked off your work-time will be spent gaping at a football match, or goading whippers to kill wired-in rabbits. And what’s the worth of a man glutted with dead rabbits, or hoarse with ravings at the Oval? If he played his football I might have less to say.

But he don't. He pays hirelings to do it for him, and eggs them on by howling and cursing. Agitate for the right to work longer hours, you blind bats, you; agitate for leave to work the flesh off your fingers if you choose. Then at least you'll have got freedom though you die for it. Better die free, and leave free men to follow you, than watch slaves play your games for you—hey?

He gets very wild over all this, and leads his young Sanchia across a difficult country—with frequent apologies, however. ‘Queen Mab, forgive me, do. I take you trapesing through the market-place and soil your white robe in public mire. Shame upon me! I might as well draw you into a gin-palace and make you sit scared among the sodden men and blue-nosed, trembling women there as lead you to ponder these awful things. But you have a great soul, Sanchia, and can go where Beatrice went, I hope.’

The letter which I print now is the outcome of his social considerations. She must have asked him to account for mankind at large. How, for instance, did he square up his individualist convictions with the needs of a complicated society? If his was the only sane life, how was a populace to lead it? He must have given some time to the answer, which breaks a spell of silence. It is more carefully written, less incoherent, less rhapsodical than usual.]

LAND'S END, *Early March.*

That was a wholesome inquiry of yours, O Artemis of the Haven [*λυμενίτι Ἀρτεμί*, says the *Anthology*, and ‘to whom, O blessed one, all meshes have been given’]. To thee, my Blessed One, I give now the rudderings of my thought, put through as fine a mesh as I could compass.

It's vastly well, upon my word, that I should live at my ease, and sleep under the stars, and go my ways, owing no man anything. But I have asked myself pretty often, as you ask me now, What of the other thirty million poor devils who moil in cities for their wives and offspring? What is to be done with them? Can they not be helped to my tub and crust and cup of cold

water? Pertinent questions of yours, most wise and holy lady—to which here's a sketchy kind of an answer. They demand a pamphlet, you know; but I spare you that.

When you come to talk about people instead of persons you are brought up against Society, and are reminded of the fact, so conveniently forgotten, that men have got now to be gregarious. I'm afraid that condition is of too long standing to be quarrelled with, even by me; but I don't doubt that the unit was originally the family, and not the tribe. I suppose we first began to herd and huddle to protect our naked bodies against fury beasts like wolves, and that we then found out (having scored off the wolves) that a state of defence was a pretty jumping-off ground for being offensive. I should like to know in whose bodies reside the souls of the first palisadoed lot who raided a neighbour's stake-fence. In this our rascally island, I misdoubt. However, here we are a society, and a nation: a great Power, Queen, Lords and Commons, and all the rest of it—a vast and piebald congregation, every member of which, they assure me, has a soul to be saved and a body to be washed.

I accept that, and go on to observe that these things being so—*rebus se habentibus ut nunc*, as the Schoolman puts it—we must now talk, in the current slang, about Civilisation. Civilisation is the hope of the hour, so fixed a quantity that a chap wrote of it the other day as if it were a disease. *Civilisation, its Cause and Cure*, was the name of his treatise; and I believe he was perfectly serious. It used to

mean, in Bentham's day, 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number,' which was modest of Bentham. I think we have now screwed it up to 'greatest happiness of everybody,' which is pleonastic, because happiness is good enough for anybody. You might as well talk of the 'greatest whiteness' as of the 'greatest happiness.' But sloppy phrases are characteristic of an age of newspapers. Anyhow, what the newspapers call civilisation, you and I call salvation.

Are we civilised, by the way? Are we getting civilised? Are we more civilised than the Greeks were in Socrates' time? Or the Romans in Cicero's? Or the Italians in Leonardo's? Or the English in Sir T. More's? Are we more humane, you might say? We are told so, I know; but between you and me and the Atlantic I doubt it profoundly. Individually, we certainly are not; collectively, not one atom. If we act individually like maniacs, as I've been telling you we do, we act in the mass like the hosts of Midian. Until war—to name but one public vice—is spoken of in the terms we now use to reprobate drunkenness, I decline to recognise that we are civilised at all. But, so far from that, we devastate the heathen; we exhaust ourselves in armaments; we cause the flower of our youth to perish for all-red maps; we still teach diplomats to lie and politicians to cadge for votes like the street-boys for coppers; we thieve at large, brag the great year through, bluster, howl at other people playing games for us; lift pious hands (to a heaven we don't believe in) at our rival's enormities; we cant and vapour—out

upon us! and what for? For two things only, Sanchia; for two things which are fatal to real civilisation—that money may be easy and that labour may be saved. If you will mention to me one public act of the last fifty years which has not been directed to the acquisition of money, or one mechanical invention which has not aimed at the saving of labour, I'll throw up the sponge and commence stockbroker.

Now, money, I say, is the one cause of slavery, and work the one hope of salvation. Therefore our civilisation, as they disastrously term it, is a condition of acquiring slavery easily, and of obliterating the hope of salvation. Pretty, isn't it, when you take the clothes off? Happy state of things! Noble ideals, shared by the Great Unionist Party and the Great Liberal Party, turn and turn about. There'll be a Great Labour Party one of these days, bickering with the others for a share in these splendid endeavours. It really might seem to you as if I was joking; but I write with tears in my eyes—that these things should be!

I don't want to labour my argument, but I must repeat myself. Civilisation is a condition of freedom to use your faculties to their fullest extent; and your faculties are every power of mind and heart and muscle and sense. Very well. Now I say that every sovereign you put into a man's pocket seduces him away from the use of his faculties, and every machine you devise directly deprives him of one of them—and then where are we? Why, here; that what is true of a man is true of a million of men, and that,

so far from being more civilised than the Periclean Athenian, we are actually less so than the neolithic dweller on the South Downs, who hacked up the earth with a red-deer's horn, and drove his cattle to the dew-pond at sundown, and back again into an enclosure banked against the wolves. And that's very odd, because with art and poetry behind us and before, we might by this time be like the Sons of God.

I won't say any more about money, lest I be a bore. I'll take Poverty for granted, as the only hope of freedom and dignity, and have a shy at machinery, which I am telling you decimates our faculties. First we'll have a simple case. Suppose that I, in the pursuit of my art, have learned how exquisitely to point a lead-pencil; and next conceive of some ingenious rascal who invents a machine and sells it for a penny, which sharpens them as well as I can. What happens? I am tempted immediately to say, 'Prodigal that I am! What hours of a short lifetime have I not wasted over pencils! What grime have I not collected in my finger-nails! What soap not consumed!' Thus I fall into the pit digged for me by that ungodly one, and then and there lose the mystery, art, and craft of pointing pencils. Thereby, and to that extent, I have crippled my faculties of eye and hand and judgment; thereby, and to that extent, those faculties atrophy. Do you follow me? Am I not right? Oh! of course I am. Now let's take a higher flight: *paulo majora canamus*.

Let's aim a shaft at the printing press—that semi-divine institution. Before the devil inspired

Gutenberg to scheme for a statue in Maintz, Literature was a sacred mystery, a kind of priesthood to which a man came as through the fire, by the clean grace of God. The poet or historian was a hierophant. If poet, he sang his own song; if historian, spoke his own tale. Literature, then, was twin-sister of Music, addressed the soul through the ear. Words were phrases, letters were notes. And more than that, oh, much more than that! The hearers of such literature, who were a thousandfold more than the readers of it, had to get it by rote. 'By heart' is a finer phrase; ah, they got it by heart, Sanchia, as I have got you. That's to say, they were filled with it; they lived on it; it was permanent possession, not *of* a great thing (oh no, no!), but *by* a great thing. The fellows went their ways carrying a divine tenant, inspired by him, driven by him to a flight. Imagine the man who absorbed the *Odyssey* by these means! Or the *Purgatorio*! Or got 'by heart' the great choruses from the *Agamemnon* of the *Oedipus*! I can picture him following the rhapsodist from deme to deme, or working it afoot from Athens to Corinth to get more of Aeschylus into his head. Is there no use of faculty in all that? Isn't that the only way of enlarging faculty, to sharpen every sense, exercise every fibre? It's so obvious that it's barely worth while to ask the question.

Now, what has the printing press done to advance the use of faculty? To begin with, it has destroyed memory: a very useful performance. Next, it has cheapened poetry. It is now within

a man's power to buy Wordsworth for twopence—and to value him accordingly. For when money is your standard of value a colourless diamond is worth more than a sea-blue sapphire, and a tenguinea Encyclopædia than a Wordsworth out of a twopenny box. That also is doing Literature a friendly turn, I suppose. Next, it has destroyed the charming art of caligraphy—very kindly. It has given us rotten paper instead of fine parchment. It has turned Literature into a kind of pictorial art instead of a musical; for to one man whose poetry is addressed to the ear there are now a thousand (from Keats to Browning, and on and on) who endeavour to hit you in the eye. That's how we get 'scarlet pains' and 'purple noons' into poetry; and

Perturb
With drip acerb.

You don't get such freaks in Homer or Dante; and Shakespeare, thank God, lived too near the great free days to consider readers before hearers. Besides, the playhouse can never be infected with Gutenberg's poison. Well, then, lastly, the printing press has made the newspaper possible; and if it had never done anything else it should have earned everlasting infamy for Gutenberg. These things that shameless machine has done, and not left a number of others undone, which it would be tedious to mention. Enough of it, and its brothers in iniquity, the railway and the steam-plough and the automaton chess-player.

Now let us get on a bit. Imagine England as

a nation solving its problems as I solved my own, dropping everything, walking to freedom *via* King's Lynn. How is that to be?

Well, you know, I feel pretty hopeful that something of the kind will come to pass. It won't be in your time or mine. You will be a saint and I a comic reminiscence long, long before. But it's amusing to work it out; and there's this about it—that within quite a short space, at any moment, a handful of the Elect may—walk to King's Lynn. The rest will wait—and they must. There's Socialism in their way: a powerful enemy to civilisation, because it accepts the money standard and is sworn ally of machinery.

We are in for a spell of Socialism. I see that clearly. It is coming quite fast. Two more general elections and the Socialists will be a great party.

It's so confoundedly plausible, you see. It accepts such a lot of scurvy institutions as fixtures—which really aren't fixtures at all. It's like a new tenant coming into a house, saying to the old one, 'Oh, don't trouble to move that gas-stove, pray. I can use it as a dressing-table.' It has collared the trades unions easily by the prospects of easy money and light work (why not say at once, Easy drugs and cheap death-beds?). It will come by way of corporations, which will absorb private enterprise; and the State, which will absorb the corporations. Water, gas, old Charnock's beer, my father's colliery, milk, trains, telegraphs, and so on. The State will come to be the Whiteley of England, the heads of Depart-

ments the shopwalkers. We shall be forced by Act of Parliament to deal there. From that to dispensing men's incomes, arranging their marriages, allotting the number of their family—these are easy steps. One sees all that.

This will be the most ghastly tyranny the world has ever seen, for it will mean government by experts in the art of governing; government by theorists who have left human nature out of the reckoning. It will be awful—but I am sure it must be faced, and believe that it will be tonic.

Tonic for this reason, that there will be a revolt, since man is happily a choleric animal, and a 'panthier when roudged.' The old Adam will come out of his new model-dwelling and wallow in the gore of his brother man. Dismembered Fabians will make miry the London streets; the President of the Local Government Board and Chairman of the London County Council will ride, roped together, in a tumbril to the Guillotine in Hyde Park—and all will be well.

Then Anarchy, I hope; then Poverty, Temperance, and Sincerity: *redeunt Saturnia regna*. There's my Cumæan prophecy. Time enough, however, to work out that little programme. We may safely leave it to our great-great-grandchildren. But to that, I do trust and believe, we shall one day return—to the Golden Age once more. But it doesn't seem to me possible that we can ever drink Liberty at ease until we have gnawed the bitter crusts of Tyranny. Socialism will give us those and to spare: we shall never know the meaning of freedom until we've had it.

That's to say—after Congregationalism, which sees the world as a society where everybody is rich, and as idle as possible, we shall be ripe, I believe, for Segregationalism, which desires that everybody shall be poor, and earn his right to poverty. The indispensable things to be learned, the absolute conditions of any such return, are in these axiomata :

(a) The End of Life is the full use of our powers.

(b) The use of Government is the securing of that for every one.

(c) Education is the fitting of our children to have it.

Once you get these things recognised as fundamental definitions, the rest follows orderly.

The world will be extraordinarily simple then. Geography will no longer be divided into physical and political. There won't be any politics, because there won't be any *pôles*—neither domestic (so called), because the Family will be the unit and not the Nation; nor foreign, because there won't be any foreigners. Wars will cease, because there will be none with whom to war; strikes between Capital and Labour, because the only Capital will *be* Labour. The strife will be, rather, to be if possible poorer than your neighbour. With nothing to tax, there can be no taxes; with no machinery, nobody can be out of work. Such terms as Peace, Progress, and Prosperity will resume their meanings: Peace will again mean peace

of mind (since bodily peace will be a condition of life itself), Progress the advance of human faculty, Prosperity the security of the two first. All this is self-evident.

Religion, morals may be left to themselves, when the family is the unit. Tribal religion becomes an absurdity when the tribe disappears; personal religion is all that counts—and we've talked about that. So with morals. Dante and the Schoolmen, who knew their long Italy broken up into ten score of fenced nations, had to deal with morality public and private; and the poor poet must needs fence off compartments in hell to accommodate public or private sinners. Thus, Thou shalt not steal, was a sin if you robbed Vittorio; but if you robbed yourself it might be a virtue. We shan't say that in Saturn's realm. To us insincerity will be the deadly sin: the sins of to-day will be ignorances to-morrow.

But you tell me that there must always be society where there are men, women, and children, since the children will grow up and fall in love, and the men and women will have been in love already, and be very capable of being so again. Family will stray into family, you think—and of course it will. There'll be Love to regulate; and that is the one affair of our lives (so far as I can see) which won't fall in line behind the fundamentals. Love is (with great respect to divines, monks, doctors, and other bigwigs) the one real, abiding, sincere business of our lives; the root of Art, the principle of Poetry; the single human passion which has the least chance

of interfering with money-making or idleness. It used to be said that Religion and Ambition were passions of equal force, but that no longer holds. Religion (as it was then meant) has nearly gone, Ambition has already gone, the way of all flesh. But Love endures, and with it the world still labours towards happiness; and Marriage (which is what it means) has got to be faced.

But not by me, my dear, writing to you. I don't think I can tell you what I think about that just yet. I don't know that I can tell you at all—or ever. If I find that I can, of course I will; or if I find that I must. It seems to me that what my heart is full of must by all means be poured into your lap, to receive the benediction of your hands. I have to talk to you, Sanchia, or die.

Oh, how are you going to read all this? And how I should love to see you at it—your pondering, grey-blue eyes, your wise, considering, doubtful smile! Shall I ever again see you at anything with my bodily eyes? Perhaps not—and Amen, anyhow. I live upon what I can remember of you, and grow by what I hope to remember. Good-bye, good-bye, Sanchia. The day is drawing in. I must light a fire.

It has just struck me. Perhaps I'm quite wrong in all this. Perhaps I ought to join a trades union and agitate for a two hours' day. Or perhaps I ought to be a Liberal member of

Parliament and have a country-house. Or would you say, an Imperialist, working for an all-red map of Africa and a Cape-to-Cairo railway? Perhaps the end of all Englishmen should be the preservation intact of this great Empire, on which the sun never sets—or never rises. Which is it? If so, be so good as to tell me by return of post, and I withdraw all that I have ever written to you.

FIFTH LETTER

ON THE WOMAN'S ART

[After the turn of the year, changes had taken place in the Percival household. Sanchia's sister Hawise had become Lady Pinwell, and was living in the country; her sister Melusine became engaged to a Mr. Gerald Scales, who was brother to a baronet, and her sister Victoria showed some signs of following her example. It was considered time for Sanchia herself to take her station in the world. In March she was presented, as she told her friend. She sent him her photograph, which showed her stiff in her glories of feathers and lace; and he acknowledged it with pleasant irony. 'My frozen dear,' he called her, 'my saint in a fereitory,' and Nuestra Señora del Paso, Our Lady of the Procession. 'I wonder very much at this moment,' he says, 'about the Brauronion of Athens. That was a great day, you know, for Artemis the Bright. There were processions of unwedded girls in crocus-coloured tunics; the tallest of them carried Artemis herself; all the others—what do you think? Little bears. Why little bears? Why, in the name of Glory, little bears? I can answer that. Don't you know about Callisto, who is now the Great Bear in the sky? Some day I'll tell you. She had a lot to do with it. But what led me on to this was the consideration whether they decked the goddess for the procession in feathers and fal-lals, and made her look as stiff and startled at once as you look here. Your eyes, my dear one, are quite round—like the O of Giotto; you look as if you hadn't winked them for an hour. When they fixed in the final feather and turned you to the looking-glass, you said "Oh!" and at that moment the frost came down and stuck you at Oh! for ever. It's charming, as the showman said, but it's not Emily. . . . All the same, I wish I had been in the Mall among the loafers to see you sedate beside

mamma, your plumed head nodding at the window; all the crowd jostling to behold you, nudging each other and saying, "There's a little beauty." Shrewd judges, those crowds of the Mall, I fancy. They have had a great deal of experience, you see, being descendants of the fellows who saw your great-grandmother go up to kiss the hand of Queen Charlotte or Queen Adelaide, as the case may have been.'

He receives her accounts of gaieties with relish, and asks after her 'swains,' as he calls them—her 'young Mr. Dartrey,' or a musical acquaintance, a M. Sergius Polschkin. With this gentleman, who swims vigorously for a while in the correspondence, he makes great play. He dubs him variously Apollo, Apolloschkin, Apollo's kin, Apollo's skin, and by a sequence of ideas, Marsyas. He sends him Russian greetings, affects to believe him a spy of the autocracy come to inveigle him back to Siberia. 'Assure him that he shall have me,' he tells her, 'upon condition that he puts me south of Lake Balkash. That's where I want to look for irises. It will be handy, between you and me, for Turkestan also—and Thibet, whither I shall certainly escape. I have long wanted to cross Thibet. But don't tell Marsyas this, there's a dear.'

He left Cornwall in April, having gloried in the blooming of his Ramondias, and pushed his leisurely and random way north-eastward. In May he spent a few days in Sanchia's company, she being, as before, at Gorston, he in or near Bill Hill, on his friend Charnock's property. What passed between them can only be gathered from what I have. He thought to have discovered her, I know, nearer to him than mere sympathy with his opinions could ever have brought her. His letters alter from that moment, subtly but unmistakably. It is not, now, that he loves her—that must have been obvious to her from the beginning. Nor is it, on the other hand, that she loves him. He never assumes that, nor seems greatly concerned whether she does or not. It is that she knows of his love for her, and that he knows of her knowledge of it. He exults in that, dallies with the wild prospects it opens to him, and (as will be seen) is tempted, and (for a moment) yields. He recovers himself almost at once, and by a fine effort takes over the command again. But I anticipate, in saying so much, what I have now to cite. The following letter is dated 'Mosedale, 5th June.' Mosedale is the 'green valley in Wastdale' which was one of his chosen camping-grounds. It is the first he sends her after leaving her at Gorston; but she is now in London again, pursuing the season, and pursued.]

MOSEDALE, 5th June.

The land laughs, but not so loud as I—nor so long. All about Black Sail the white mist-wreaths stream and fly; but not so fast, driven by the west wind, as my thoughts, which my heart-beats urge. Mosedale Beck is in foaming fettle, and some *Primula japonica*, which I sowed there last year, are a cloud of crimson, coral, and salmon-pink, floating (as meseemeth) over a bed of lettuce-green. There's a palette! The sun strikes all this blaze of colour, and you think of Van Eyck's 'Adoration of the Lamb'—or you would if you were here. And you *are* here, my Blessed One, as you are everywhere with me. A pillar of fire by night, of white cloud by day, in the glow of the fire, in the gleam of the cloud I see your holy face; and as the brook murmurs its content with things as they are I hear your low clear tones call me by my names of friend, brother—ah, no more of that! Let me remember how good it is to be alive on such a golden morning.

Now bloom white violets, now daffodils,
And on the windy uplands lilies blow;
Now breaks to flower my Flower, and fulfils
Valley and hillside with her rosy glow.
Meadows, in vain you laugh your idle grace!
What have ye that she hath not in her face?

A long way after Meleager; but he never sang his ἥδη λευκόιον θάλλει more stoutly than I my jingle.

Why do lovers howl and rend their garments when they are parted? There's that same

Meleager, almost in the same breath, wailing ἀρπασται! ‘She’s been taken from me,’ he raves; ‘what beast could be so cruel?’ All because poor dear Heliodora went back to town, to be taken out to parties by her mamma, to have gilded youths about her in Hyde Park, and quite a swarm of them buzzing over her dance-card, and scribbling their initials all over it, with little white pencils held most uncomfortably in little white kids. You see, I know all about it, and ain’t jealous. No, no; I leave that to the God of Moses and other uneasy despots—potentates who have such a high opinion of themselves that they are forced to have low ones of their ladies. I protest, by the light I have, that it isn’t at all necessary for me to see you, though extremely so that I should love you, and have what I have. Why, what should I do with you that I have not done better already! Watch you, touch your hand in a crowd, edge up with Apollo and brisk Mr. Dartrey to take you out a-dancing? No, by Hercules, but I do better with you here. I see you, feel your nearness, know you thrilling in the dusk. ‘Thou and I, sphered in solitude’—thou and I! And that’s better than to spy after you in the Park; and as for dancing—why, you are dancing with the daffodils here in Mosedale, and I play the tune on my pipe, like Daphnis or some other son of Pan. Let Apollo caper in Grosvenor Square and steer you in and out of the throng; your soul, my soul, is here with me, treading the Galaxy in a dance to no mortal music. How am I to condescend to trivial intercourse with you

who have given me of your heart's communion? Never, never, never. You and I have done imperishably. I surrender to your Dartreys and Polschkins your temporary dwelling-place, much too good for them though it be.

That's the kind of lover you have, Queen Mab, for so you have made him. He is very well content that you should let your light shine on herded London; though the light shine in darkness and the darkness comprehend it not. Here and there will be one who will be able to walk in your beam. Dia Artemis, I praise the gods of the country for what I have of you.

I am very well content, I say, to plod my country ways and know you wielding your spells in town. A great power is in your thin sweet hands, my sweet; you are in the way of being a great artist. If I take a professional view of your life and conversation you mustn't blame me; for, botcher that I may be, I'm an artist myself, or no lover. And perhaps you remember how we talked about Art in the park, under the golden oaks, and how you repined at having to give up your hopes of a studio; and how I told you that painting wasn't the woman's art, nor sculpture neither, nor poetry either. Do you?

Well, I stick to that. Rosa Bonheur wore trousers, but couldn't paint any the better. Good soul, she was no Rubens. George Eliot played the Tenth Muse in St. John's Wood Road, or somewhere of the sort, and had a humour of her own for which she had to pay—as none knew better than she. Aurora Leigh wrote verses, and

her great old burning poet smothered her with incense, but didn't make a poet of her for all that. He simply proved what an artist she was in her own art—which no man can touch. There's man's art, you must know, and woman's art; and though I love every stroke of your brush, and know how sensitive it is, and how patient, yet I see you an immortal artist without any brushes at all, in a stuff more subtle than paint, more shining than Pheidias's ivory and gold; and I see the crowd before your masterpiece hushed and still. Some of them cover their eyes and others say their prayers, and others laugh for mere joy of great work. What do you say to that, little artist? Isn't that an art worth your pains?

It's an art so difficult, to be worked at under conditions so confusing, that it's only one woman in a thousand can succeed in it. Charm, as with all arts, is at the bottom of it; I fear it must be owned, too, that persuasion is an essential. But, like every great form of Art, yours is didactic. It teaches involuntarily virtue, temperance, and holiness. Men and women come and behold it, and go their ways the better for having seen it, and the richer for the experience; and the cleaner for purged emotions, or, it may be, fired by its excellence to a generous rivalry, themselves to work for such high ends. What can be better? If you can so work upon your delicate surface as to mould it close to your noble soul, and impress it with your own quality; if in the gallery of the world you can unveil yourself for the thousand pair of eyes to see, and praise God for the grace

to see—why, what an artist you are, and what an audience you have! No painter since this world began to spin had such a one, no musician, no church-builder. Christopher Wren, you may think, had a greater, thronging his great dome on the hill; but I tell you, no. For you, as you go your ways about the city, will every day pass more people than Paul's would hold, and need not pass one but will go on his road, unknowingly, the better for the moment's nearness to you. Like a whiff of thyme on a grassy down, like a breath of violets from a bank, or of bean-flower blown across a dusty hedge, some gentle exhalation of your soul sighed through your body will hint to the passion-driven wretch things innocent and quiet. The blue beam of your steadfast eyes may turn his own to heaven; a chance-caught, low, sweet tone of your voice may check clamour; an answer may turn his wrath; the mere hang of your clothes, so nearly will they express your nature, may send him on his way hopeful and renewed. You can't know—it's none of your affair—how or to what end your art will tell. All your business as artist is to work perfectly, to have the vision and to get it down.

And what a material to work with—fine, moving, breathing, quick-fluttering flesh! Infinitely more elastic than painter's stuff; warm, tinged with life, instinct with it; rhythmic, eloquent. You can be picture, form, poem, symphony in one. You address the mind through every sense. Every gesture is charged, every throb can express, every word be a phrase, every look a tone! Think of

it, Sanchia, before you turn away. Think well whether upon that exquisite medium you cannot impress your best.

As I write, I fire from within, and see a vision of a Woman to whom a whole world might bow down. It's not for most women; I think it's for very few; but there's no doubt about its possibility. It's no harder for a woman to make herself a work of supreme art than for a man to paint a 'Las Meniñas' or write a *Père Goriot*. But she must have a genius for self-expression—and you have it.

The Ideal, since men first looked up to the heights, has always been in the shape of a woman. Sex has much to do with that, I don't doubt, for man has always been the maker, and has always dreamed of what he can never be. Athene of the men of Attica, Artemis of the Arcadians, Mary of the Christians—it has always been so. The holiest thing of all, the most mysterious, inaccessible, has worn the bounty of a beautiful woman, and God has spoken through her eyes. Grey-blue eyes, ringed with dark, for me. A slim and pliant form. A face of pure oval faintly tinged with rose. A round and firm chin, where character strikes sharply yet gently. Pale lips drooping at the corners ever so little—for sympathy, you know. That proud Greek bow is too remote from our labour and sorrow. Broad brows speaking candour and charity to the wise and the wayward alike. An ardent mind, eager for light; a habit so strong to purpose and action that

chastity is involved; and withal a glowing heart which love will one day blow into a flame, and thus fulfil the woman from the maid.¹ Some day, Sanchia, some day the woman will be fulfilled and the work done. Then, like a priest who has conversed with mystery and been face to face with the holiest, I shall stand up before the people on their knees. *Ite, missa est*, I shall say—and bid the boy blow out the altar candles.

A vision of life indeed rises up, and lifts me after it. The shifts I am at to make my own little world a simple, cleanly, wholesome place drop suddenly off me like superfluous clothes. One is only driven to wear them, mark you well, as screens against the mire and bad smells of modern ways. Where the treasure is there will the heart be also. Nothing need vex him who has the treasure in his heart. Life turns inwards, and keeps out the cold—as gipsies turn their backs to the weather and spread their hands to the crackling logs.

Mine is a lonely life, you know, and often I am forced to bawl my song, ‘The jolly life I lead,’ for fear I should hear the undercurrent of misgiving, and listen for nothing else. So, like Figaro, I make haste to laugh, and thus continue to delude myself till, by and by, the mood passes, and I can look up at the stars or the open sky, and know that I am in tune with them. That’s a great business of ours, I assure you, to make a harmony. Listen to the music of the spheres,

¹All that forms a portrait, happy and exact, of Sanchia Percival as she was in 1894.

and screw up to the pitch they keep. There's our art for the conversion of the world. For we all aim at that—no less; and I with the rest. You know my gospel and won't take it amiss for being somewhat musty. Poverty, poverty, poverty! That's the cry, if you would be rich, O son of man. But now, when I crave the treasure of your golden heart, my saint, and sigh sometimes that I may have to go without it, ain't I the very inconsistent poor devil I complain of my next-door neighbour for being? Of course I am. Yet—oh, for the deep draught of your eyes I lately had! Oh, to read the great trust in your long gaze! Oh, for the assurance of your thrilled voice, and oh, for the touch of your hand!

I'm a recreant, I see. Farewell, Sanchia.

[*It seems that he was fired indeed. He wrote again—very shortly after—on his way to the South and to her.*]

I am coming to see you. In two days I shall see your eyes—and then, if you please, never again.

SIXTH LETTER

THE TRAMP'S TESTAMENT

[*The writer, my friend, scared out of his philosophy, made forced marches from Wasdale to London, arriving there in June, the season at its height. What sort of appearance his lean figure, clad in white sweater and grey flannel trousers, with his swarthy, darkly smiling face, and eyes of gipsy-green, may have made there—say, in Bond Street of a fine afternoon—one can but guess. It may have been, and let us hope it was so, that he had already, in those early, vehement years of his life, learned to accommodate himself to the prejudices of society. Later on he had certainly done so, for I met him frequently in London in 1903-4-5, and found nothing garish in his appearance. He had a dress-coat at that time, and might have sat among his peers at the opera without remark, though I believe he never did. He used, I think, to say that you could only hear music properly alone or with musicians. Very naturally, then, he chose the gallery. But these are trifles; what I am now concerned to say is that he came to London in that summer of '95, and saw, not once but frequently, the lady of his adoration. He was with her in picture-galleries, museums, and other resorts of lovers and friends; she went with him to Kew, to Hampton Court, and elsewhere. There is no question in my mind but that the pair of them thoroughly understood one another.*

Then, of the suddenest, he goes away, and Sanchia, we learn, drifts into a position which her friend can never have foreseen. Of this and all that it meant to her and to him I can say nothing here, but may refer the reader to Open Country, where it is set out in full. The last letter I can publish here explains the curious change in affairs only from the writer's side. Whether or no it justifies him in the position he has taken up, to Sanchia Percival,

*to you, or to me, are questions which I don't feel able to answer.
I hold no brief for him, and prefer that he should speak for himself.]*

CHANCTONBURY RING, *A Wild Night.*

All the hounds of heaven and hell are loose about me to-night. The South-west has opened wide his gates, and the wind-pack is abroad. But their howling and the gnashing of their teeth cannot drown the shrill music of my heart. This is the song it sings—I have loved, I have loved—I have kissed her once and let her go. Now I am alone in the dark, with no companion but a dream.

She is not for me—she is too high. It were as if one wooed a goddess. No, no, I have done well to give her back her heart, to put away her thin sweet hands, to look my last into her deep eyes, to wait my last upon her sad lips. The pain she has, alone with her heart, is as nothing to the wrong I dared to dream against her. She, Sanchia, the tramp's mate—hedgerow-comrade of his disordered goings! Madman, what were you about?

Now the dream is over. It has gone as this great storm will go. When the last tatters of the torn clouds have flown their way before the gale, I shall look out seaward to a white-rimmed sky, or over the weald of Sussex to the blue Surrey hills; see Hindhead like a broken knife-blade, and the long ridge of Leith Hill shrouded in trees. The truce of heaven will shine on all alike; the sun, rising over Wolstonbury, will touch the spire of Cowfold, and warm the grey and russet of old

Wiston into life. On me too will that peace descend, and I shall tell myself that all is well. For Sanchia lives her holy life, thou poor fool; and thou mayst love her all thy fill, and take joy in her fair going, thanking God for all that she hath been to thee. Thou hast had thy vision of Artemis the Chaste. Courage, then; do thy work in the world. She is thy friend for ever—is not this honour enough?

I know well that it is.

Ask any woman you please which was the happiest time of her life, she will tell you—the year of her betrothal. Ask any man, he will tell you—his bachelor days. What do these things mean? It is worth while finding out. That which should be the perfecting of the nature of either, when the two human hemispheres, as Plato puts it, are one rounded whole again, does not in either case result in happiness. Contentment, possibly, but not happiness. Marriage, then, is not the happy state. How then?

It is not, and it cannot be, as it is now ordered; for the notion of possession, of property once more, has entered in and vitiated it. It has poisoned the nature of man and degraded the conscience of woman. Women are not, it may be, angels before marriage; it is certain that they should not be property afterwards. But since, by virtue of a legal contract, they are technically so, a man is so made by tradition and proneness to possess that he will consider her so, even against his own judgment, even despite his own honour;

and the moment he believes himself secure of her he will cease to serve her. Now, to love a woman, in my belief, is not only to desire her. Much more it is to be allowed to serve her. The better part of loving is the need to give, not the desire to receive. In a perfect union of hearts and bodies the rivalry is not who shall get, but who shall spend the more. There should be no end to that noble strife—nor will there be on the woman's part; nor need there be on the man's, if he is always *to be* blessed. Poisoned man is the bane of marriage, not woman. It is natural to a woman to mate, natural to a man to master. But unless we curb that brute instinct in the man there can be no real happiness for the woman.

As for me, I will never marry as the law now stands. I will not enslave any woman. To put into my hands legal instruments whereby I am secure in her so long as she is worth my while, and free of her the moment she does what it is my right, as a man, to do; so to treat the woman in whose eyes I have seen heaven, to whose heart I go for peace, is to insult me by the supposition that I can so insult her. I will never do it, Sanchia. I'll become a monk first.

What's to be done then? I have nothing heroic to suggest. If I go maimed through life, an unrounded hemisphere, I'll hobble along, my conscience clear, at least. And perhaps 'Patience and shuffle the cards' is as good a roadside saw as any other. There are signs that the accursed old system is breaking up—signs on all sides. Reason-

able persons have long lifted their eyebrows, and now are beginning to lift their voices. So the time may be coming when they can lift up their hearts. It won't be yet; you and I may never see it. It was expedient once, we read, that one man should die for the people. It is doubtless necessary that there should be frequent crucifixions. It seems to be the way of the world. A man to whom the truth is blazed as clear as noon goes out into the streets filled to the lips with his revelation. Smug citizens avoid him, put up their shutters, and lock their doors; dogs bark at his heels; the ribald gather; one throws a stone. Then comes the storm upon him, in the which he falls, battered, bleeding, with glazed eyes. There's an end of the blasphemer who dares to question established order, who says that use and wont are not sacred at all, but hoary in iniquity.

Having slain him, they learn that he was a god, and his revelation a law of nature. Up goes a statue, and his words are read as gospel. That's how we get on in this quaint world, climbing to the stars on the heaped bodies of our heroes and sages. It's no use quarrelling with it. Whether I'm to trample or be trampled, teach me, Sanchia, not to complain.

If I had been less certain of what honour and conscience had to tell me, I had made you mine at Gorston the other day—not by that kiss you gave me, but by others I had given you. My beautiful, ardent, noble, thrilled young creature, visible incarnation of all that is clean and quick, I

can thank God that you have kissed me once, and that I have done no more than receive that benediction. They say that holy Artemis bent over Endymion as he lay on Latmos. 'Tis her only stooping: she never graced Hippolytus so highly, another devotee. And Dante lived to walk the dusty ways of hell, and see the live silver of the spheres, having received the salutation of Beatrice. She bowed to him, once, in the street. He never felt chilly after that, nor complained of short rations. God knows that I shall not.

The life I lead seems to me reasonable, because it shirks nothing, concedes nothing, is useful, brings me back and keeps me close to the real Good Things. Did I ever tell you of a man I knew once, a man called Thursfield, who had what they call misfortunes? Such indeed they were. His children grew up and went into the world; his wife tired of him and went her ways also. He was left in middle life with nothing but some thousands a year and a house or two. Odd as one might think it, they didn't satisfy him. He let them all go; I believe that he endowed a charity with them—an almshouse of sorts. I found him some two years ago in a hollow of the Dorsetshire Downs, inhabiting a shepherd's wooden hut, living mostly on what he could coax out of the unthrifty soil. He quoted George Borrow to me: 'There's night and day, brother, both sweet things; there's likewise the wind on the heath!' He called these the Good Things, and said that they were good enough for him. The sun, the wind, the rain: I

too find them excellent. And if I want another stand-by or a stronghold to fly to, I can lift up my eyes to the everlasting hills. Black Sail will always shelter Mosedale, and in Chanctonbury Ring I can still find Pan and the Nymphs.

The storm dies down, the wet stars behold me. Over the bones of dead Briton and dead Roman the leaf-mould lies quiet, and out of them spring old Goring's beeches. Dim through the dark I can guess at the great-breasted downs, and hear afar off the tinkle of the sheep-bells. Courage comes back after a night with Pan at his fiercest; the nymphs peer up from the borstal, or through the holt; and here gleams a white shoulder, and there weave white arms. The God of Nature is a kindly soul. He likes us to have courage, and keep good hearts.

Farewell, Sanchia, too dear for my possessing; I leave you in the keeping of that benevolent one. 'For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.' When next I write to you, or see your face, lover or not, you shall never know it. And I'll come and pipe at your wedding when you bid me. I have what I have, and am content. Lo, the dawn is here! Farewell.

[Here ends a phase in the life of the writer of these letters. The correspondence, vitally changed, since it contains from this point onwards no word or hint of love, continued intermittently]

for another few years. In 1900 Sanchia Percival, to her friend's deep concern, accepted the proposals of a Mr. Nevile Ingram, a wealthy young gentleman with an estate in the North of England. After that letters became rare, and to all appearance a mere interchange of civilities. Four years later yet—in 1904—the writer himself wearied of single life. He found a lady to his liking, and, I believe, went abroad.]

THE END

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